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THE
MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST,
EXPLAINED

ACCORDING TO THEIR
SPIRITUAL MEANING,

IN THE WAY OF
QUESTION AND ANSWER.

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"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."—JOHN x. 37, 38.

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PREFACE.

THE following explanation of the miracles wrought by the Great Saviour, was penned under the full conviction that every miracle—like all the other histories both of the Old and New Testament, involves in it an internal or spiritual meaning, applicable to the church in general, and to every individual member of the church in particular; and that, by virtue of such internal or spiritual meaning, the record of the miracle is, in *reality*, as it is *called*, the Word of God.

If the reader, then, be indisposed to make this acknowledgment, he is admonished instantly to lay down the book, and not to proceed to the explanation, lest it should only give him offence, and lead him to close his eyes more obstinately against the light of truth, and finally to profane it. On the other hand, if he be disposed to believe in the spiritual contents of the Word of God, and thus in the spiritual meaning of the miracles recorded in it, let him then proceed to the following explanation, because it may be humbly hoped that it will then tend at once to confirm his faith, and to influence and regulate his conduct. For

he will then be enabled, through the Divine Grace and Mercy, to discern that the operation of the Great and Holy God, or of Jesus Christ and His Divine Humanity, is ever constant and uniform; and that, consequently, He is ever willing and urgent to do the same mighty works in His church at this day, and in every individual member of His church, which He once did in the land of Judea, with this only difference, that in the land of Judea His miraculous operation was applied to the bodies of men, whereas at this day it is exercised on their souls, and thence on the external man, and body.

But he will not rest merely in this belief of what the Saviour is disposed to operate, because he will discover further the necessity of co-operation on his part, in order to give full effect to the Divine operation. Thus he will be led to see what Jesus Christ meant, when He said—"He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." (John xiv. 12.) For co-operating with His Saviour God, in the great works of instruction, of reformation, of purification from sin, of regeneration through the Divine love and wisdom, thus of deliverance from all spiritual disease and infirmity, and of resurrection to the newness and blessedness of heavenly love and life, he will perceive clearly, that he doeth the works which Jesus Christ doeth, and even "greater works," because they are done from, or under the influence of, the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ,

made one with the Father: thus they are done, not only on the body, but on the soul; and not only by Jesus Christ alone, but by Jesus Christ in conjunction with the co-operating will of man; consequently, they are "greater works" than those done by Jesus Christ previous to His final glorification, because these latter were done only on the body, and without co-operation on the part of man; and were done also at a period when the humanity of the Incarnate God was not so fully glorified as it was after His ascension.*

The reader, then, if he be wise, will learn from the following explanation of the Lord's miracles, that he is called perpetually to do the same miracles, not indeed on the body either of himself or of others, still less by any power which he possesses merely of himself, but on his own soul and on the souls of others, by instruction in the ways of righteousness, and by consequent reformation, regeneration, and resurrection to newness of life, and all this by virtue of a power communicated continually from the Divine Humanity of the Incarnate God. Thus he will be further taught what Jesus Christ meant when He said—"These signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

* See a fuller discussion of this subject at the close of this work, under the article entitled, "The Signs which follow them that Believe," page 236.

(Mark xvi. 17, 18.) For in proportion as under Divine influence, yet in perfect freedom as of himself, he renounces and rejects all known evils, he will discover that he, at the same time, casts out devils who are in close connection with those evils. In proportion, too, as he professes and practices evangelical doctrine of faith in the Incarnate God, and of a life according to His Divine precepts, he will make the further discovery, that he “speaks with a new tongue.” In proportion, again, as he elevates his sensual principle, with all its appetites, to conjunction with a spiritual or eternal end, he will rejoice in perceiving that he “takes up serpents.” Again, in proportion as he escapes infection from the false persuasions injected into his understanding, he will experience an additional joy from the Divine promise, that “if he drinks any deadly thing, it shall not hurt him.” And lastly, in proportion as he applies the Divine aid of God’s Holy Word and Spirit to the removal of all his spiritual maladies and infirmities, he will offer up continual praises to his God for the assurance given him, that when “he shall lay hands on the sick, they shall recover.”

That the following pages may be rendered instrumental in begetting, cherishing, and strengthening the principles of such a faith, as manifests itself by the above unequivocal “signs,” is the devout prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

Manchester.

INTRODUCTION.

Q. WHAT do you mean by a "miracle"?

A. A miracle is the manifestation of a supernatural power controlling, in some degree, the common or established laws of nature.

Q. How many kinds of miracles are there?

A. Miracles in general may be referred to two classes, "Divine miracles," and what may be called "magical" or "infernal miracles."

Q. What do you mean by a Divine miracle?

A. A Divine miracle is the exertion and effect of a supernatural agency, exercised by the Almighty Himself for the benefit of mankind.

Q. And what do you mean by a magical or infernal miracle?

A. A magical or infernal miracle is the exercise and effect of magical and infernal agency, separated from Divine agency, and in opposition to it.

Q. Can you tell me any instances of this latter agency, as recorded in the Word of God?

A. It is written in the book of Exodus, that "when Moses lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood; and the fish that were in the river died, and the river stank," &c. And it is then added, that "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments." (Chap. vii. 20, 21, 22.) Again, it is declared by Jesus Christ, that "in the latter days there shall arise false Christs

and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive even the very elect." (Matt. xxiv. 24.) The "beast" also in the Revelation is described as doing "great wonders, so as to make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." (Chap. xiii. 13, 14.)

Q. Can you see any reason why the Almighty should permit His enemies to exercise a miraculous power in opposition to Himself and to His kingdom?

A. Yes; there is every good reason to suppose that the Almighty grants this permission for the sake of His own children, or with a view to the trial of their faith, and to its further confirmation in consequence of such trial. For the necessary effect of an infernal or magical miracle, on the mind of a well-disposed person, must be to induce doubt respecting the truth of a Divine miracle, and the result of that doubt would be a clearer discrimination between the two classes of miracles, and thus finally a rejection of the infernal or magical miracle, and an establishment of the power and validity of the Divine miracle.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the discrimination between these two kinds of miracles?

A. The discrimination is grounded not so much in the external aspect or form of the two kinds of miracles, as in their internal characters and qualities. For the internal quality and character which distinguishes the Divine miracle, is—that it is representative and expressive of the Divine and spiritual principles which gave it birth. Thus, when Jesus Christ raised the dead to life, this miracle contained in its inward bosom a Divine and living principle, and was thus expressive of the operation of that principle, not only in imparting new life to a dead body, but also in imparting new and spiritual life to a dead soul, by raising it from the death of sin to the

life of righteousness. This was the case, too, with all the other miracles wrought by that Incarnate God, every one of which was thus figurative of a Divine operation, exercised not on matter only, but on spirit also, producing in the latter an effect corresponding to that which was produced in the former. But in the case of magical or infernal miracles, no such internal principle was operative, and of course no such principle could be expressed, and therefore the miracle was a mere outward and dead form, without animation from any spiritual principle of life whatsoever.

Q. What, then, would you suppose was the immediate design of the Lord's miracles ?

A. In the first place, His miracles were incontestible proofs to all His followers of a Divine supernatural agency, and not only so, but of a Divine mercy and loving-kindness. Thus they produced a double effect on all His penitent disciples, convincing their understandings, in the first place, of the Divinity of their Lord and Master ; and, in the next place, operating on their wills, by making them sensible of His Divine tenderness and compassion towards the children of men. It is, therefore, well to be understood, that it was not the intention of His miracles to make converts to His doctrine, since there is every reason to believe that no one can be converted to the truth by any miraculous testimony whatsoever, agreeably to what is intimated in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where it is written, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.) Accordingly, Jesus Christ testifies in another place, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God ;" (John vii. 17.) instructing us by these words, that the qualification to admit the evidence of Divine doctrine does not arise so much from miraculous testimony, as from a sincere desire to do the will of God, thus from a well-disposed heart and life. Accordingly, the unbelieving Jews were not convinced by our Lord's miracles, no

does it appear to have been His intention to promote their conviction in that way, and therefore He says in another place, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it." (Matt. xii. 39.) The conclusion, therefore, is, that the Lord's miracles were intended for the confirmation of the faith of His pious followers; but not for the conviction and conversion of those who had no previous disposition or inclination to become His followers.

Q. But in the Scriptures of the New Testament, mention is made of "signs" as well as of miracles. How do you distinguish between a sign and a miracle?

A. By a "sign" is to be understood a Divine supernatural agency operative on the understandings of men, and thereby producing conviction respecting religious truth, which conviction, so far as it relates to the understanding, may at any time be wrought by the Almighty, and would at all times be wrought, if it was agreeable to the order of His providence and conducive to the regeneration, and consequent salvation, of mankind. But inasmuch as such conviction of the understanding, separate from the conversion of the will, would be of no avail, or rather, would be injurious to man, by rendering him the subject of a more severe condemnation, supposing him to be unfaithful to it; therefore such signs are not given, and to seek them is declared by Jesus Christ to be the proper mark and character of an "evil and adulterous generation." Miracles, on the other hand, do not produce conviction of the understanding only, but are intended to affect the will, as was above observed; and, therefore, miracles are vouchsafed of the Divine Mercy for the reasons above-mentioned, because Divine miracles have a representative signification, by virtue of which they become instructive and edifying to all those who are in a state of mind capable of being benefitted by them,—in other words, who are in a state of mind sincerely desirous both to know and to do the whole will of their Heavenly Father.

Q. How ought you, then, to be affected by a sense of the Lord's miracles ?

A. With unfeigned adoration both of His Divine Power and Divine Goodness, manifested in every miracle which He performed. I ought also to be rightly affected with the significative sense of every miracle ; and with this view, to explore attentively what their distinct signification is, that so I may gain a clearer insight into the nature of the Divine operation. Lastly, I ought to consider, and to consider seriously, that Jesus Christ, in His adorable mercy, is ever disposed to work all His miracles in my own mind and life ; and since this cannot be done, only so far as I co-operate freely with Him in the working of such miracles, therefore I ought to consider, further, that I am appointed, under Him, to perform the same miracles, agreeably to His own declaration, where He says concerning every one of His true followers, "The works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." (John xiv. 12.) I am resolved, therefore, henceforth to pay due attention to the meaning and import of every Divine miracle, and to take heed to my own conduct and conversation, that I may always be in a fit state to be a subject of the miraculous operation of my God and Saviour, and may thus co-operate with Him in the removal of all my natural infirmities, ignorance, and disorders, until I be finally restored, through His Divine Agency, to the full and complete order of that heavenly life which He is ever willing to re-establish in every principle and degree both of my soul and body. AMEN.

CONTENTS.

MATT. viii. 1—4.	PAGE
The Leper Cleansed.....	1
MATT. viii. 5—13.	
The Centurion's Servant healed.....	7
MATT. viii. 14, 15.	
Peter's Wife's Mother healed.....	14
MATT. viii. 16, 17.	
The Devils cast out.....	18
MATT. viii. 23—27.	
The Winds and Waves rebuked.....	23
MATT. viii. 28—34.	
The Possessed with Devils coming out of the Tombs.....	30
MATT. ix. 2—8.	
The Sick of the Palsy healed.....	35
MATT. ix. 18—26.	
The Ruler's Daughter raised.....	42
MATT. ix. 20—22.	
The Bloody Issue cured.....	47
MATT. ix. 27—31.	
The two Blind Men restored to Sight.....	52

MATT. ix. 32—35.	PAGE
The Devil cast out from the Dumb Man.....	57
MATT. xii. 9—13.	
The Withered Hand restored.....	63
MATT. xii. 22—28.	
The Devil cast out from the Blind and Dumb.....	70
MATT. xiv. 14—21.	
The Five Loaves and the Two Fishes.....	75
MATT. xiv. 22—33.	
Jesus Walking on the Sea.....	86
MATT. xiv. 34—36.	
The Sick healed in the Land of Gennesaret.....	96
MATT. xv. 21—28.	
The Devil cast out from the Daughter of the Woman of Canaan.....	100
MATT. xv. 30, 31.	
The Lame, Blind, Dumb, Maimed, and many others, healed	108
MATT. xv. 32—39.	
The Seven Loaves and Fishes.....	113
MATT. xvii. 1—9.	
The Transfiguration.....	118
MATT. xvii. 14—21.	
The Lunatic healed.....	129
MATT. xvii. 24—27.	
The Piece of Money found in the Fish's Mouth.....	136
MATT. xx. 29—34.	
Sight restored a second time to two Blind Men	142
MATT. xxi. 18—20.	
The Barren Fig-tree Cursed.....	147

	PAGE
LUKE v. 4—11.	
The Miraculous Draught of Fishes	152
LUKE vii. 12—16.	
The Widow's Son raised.....	161
LUKE xiii. 11—17.	
The Woman who had a Spirit of Infirmary.....	166
LUKE xiv. 1—6.	
The Dropsy cured.....	173
LUKE xvii. 12—19.	
The ten Lepers Cleansed	179
JOHN ii. 1—11.	
The Water turned into Wine.....	186
JOHN v. 2—14.	
The Impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda.....	195
JOHN ix. 1—7.	
The Man Blind from his Birth.....	202
JOHN xi. 1—44.	
Lazarus raised from the Dead,.....	211
MATT. xxviii. 1—20; MARK xvi. 1—20; LUKE xxiv. 1—53; JOHN xx. 1—31, xxi. 1—25.	
The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.....	220
The Signs which follow them that Believe.....	236
ACTS ii. 1—36.	
The Miracle at Pentecost.....	243
A Prayer	255

THE LEPER CLEANSED.

MATT. viii. 1—4.

“When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”

Q. WHAT do you conceive to be here figured by the “leper,” who is the subject of this miracle?

A. The leprosy, like all other bodily diseases prevalent at the time, was a representative figure of spiritual disease, and the spiritual disease, which it represented, was the profanation of Good and of Truth, which then prevailed in the Jewish Church.

Q. What do you understand by the profanation of Good and Truth?

A. Man is guilty of profanation, and is thus a spiritual leper, whensoever he has been initiated into the knowledge of what is true, and into the love of what is good, and afterwards acts contrary to such knowledge and love. This evil of profanation is represented by what Jesus Christ says concerning the unclean Spirit, that “when he is cast out, he says, I will return to my house from whence I came out. Then he goeth, and taketh to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the

last state of that man is worse than the first." (Matt. xii. 43—45.) The Lord, therefore, in His merciful providence, exercises a peculiar care over mankind, to prevent, as far as possible, their receiving more knowledge, and being affected with more love of what is right and good, than they can be supported in to the end of life, because the profanation of what is good and true exposes man to a more grievous condemnation than he can be exposed to by mere ignorance of, and insensibility to, what is good and true, agreeably to those words of Jesus Christ, where He says, "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few." (Luke xii. 47, 48.) The leper, then, who is the subject of this miracle, is a representative figure of all those who have once admitted into their minds the knowledge of heavenly things, and been made sensible of the love of them, and who afterwards decline from such knowledge and love, in consequence of immersing their thoughts and affections again in the selfish and worldly love which they had forsaken.

Q. But it is said of the above leper, "that he worshipped Jesus Christ, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." What do you understand here by the leper's worshipping Jesus Christ?

A. The worship of Jesus Christ implies the acknowledgment of His Divinity, and thus that He was God made Man in One Divine Person. Such worship, therefore, is here recorded of the above leper, because the acknowledgment of the Divinity of Jesus Christ is the necessary qualification to draw from Him the operation of His Divine Virtue for the cure of disease, whether mental or bodily.

Q. And what do you further understand by the leper saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean"?

A. These words involve confidence, on the part of the leper, in the Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, whom

he now worshipped, which confidence was grounded in the conviction, that Jesus Christ is able to accomplish every purpose which is in agreement with His own Divine Order and Providence; in other words, that He has power to effect all things which are not contrary to the laws of His own appointment, thus to the determinations of His Divine Will. This confidence, therefore, is here recorded, because it is another essential qualification for receiving all the benefits and blessings resulting from the Divine Operation.

Q. But it follows, that "Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." What do you here understand by Jesus putting forth His hand?

A. By the hand is denoted power, because the hand is formed to execute the determinations of the will, in which all power originates. By the hand of Jesus, therefore, is represented Divine Power, which is Omnipotence, and by putting forth the hand is signified the exercise of that Omnipotence, thus the fulfilment of the purposes of the Divine Mercy and Love. According to this sense, it is to be understood that the blessed Jesus is always putting forth His hand, because He is always in the act of relieving the infirmities, soothing the sorrows, and healing the spiritual distempers of all His children who believe in His Divinity, and have confidence in the Omnipotence which He possesses as the Only God of heaven and earth.

Q. And what do you conceive to be further meant by "Jesus touching the leper, and saying, I will; be thou clean"?

A. By touching, is here to be understood the communication of that Omnipotence which is signified by putting forth the hand; in other words, its application to the distempered principles which it intended to cure. It is therefore added, "I will; be thou clean," because the expression "I will," is significative of the Divine Intention, or Purpose, as originating in the Divine Mercy, or Love, whilst the expression, "Be thou clean," denotes

with equal emphasis the accomplishment of that intention, or purpose, through the application of an Omnipotent energy to the malady which was to be removed. It is, therefore, further to be understood, not only that Jesus Christ is perpetually "putting forth His hand," and touching His distempered children, who with confidence supplicate His Divine Aid, but likewise that He is perpetually saying, as in the present instance, "I will ; be thou clean ;" in other words, that He is perpetually declaring the purpose of His mercy to relieve the wants and heal the infirmities of His penitent and humble children, and is always in the act of executing that purpose, whensoever His children are in a proper state of heart and of life to admit His Divine Operation.

Q. And what do you understand by what next follows, where it is said, "immediately his leprosy was cleansed" ?

A. The Blessed Jesus had before expressed the purpose of His love, and also its operation, in the emphatic words "I will ; be thou clean," and, therefore, now the effect of that purpose and operation is described. Thus we are instructed that every Divine Work is threefold, including in it intention, which is of love, design, which is of wisdom, and effect, which is of operation ; and thus too we are instructed further, that in every effect there must be a cause or design, and in every cause or design there must be a purpose or end ; and that consequently in every work of creation and redemption there is a manifestation of Divine Love and Wisdom, of which such work is therefore an exact representative type or figure, so that the whole of creation may be regarded as a theatre representative of the Divine Principles in which it originates, which are love, wisdom, and use.

Q. But it is written that "Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man ; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." What do you conceive to be here meant by the injunction, "See thou tell no man" ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, this injunction implies, that the cleansed leper should be silent

respecting the Divine Operation from which he had received such an extraordinary benefit, and in this sense of the term it contains a useful caution to those who are forward to speak of the experience they have had of the Divine Mercy, and who consider it as a crime to conceal from others the blessings which have been bestowed on themselves. But, according to the spiritual idea, the injunction implies that the miracle wrought should not affect the understanding only, by being regarded merely in an intellectual view, or as a point of curious speculation, but should affect the will of its cleansed subject, by being regarded as an effect of the pure love and mercy of the Most High God. It therefore follows, "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." For by the injunction, "Go thy way," is to be understood a requirement to live according to the mercy which had been experienced; and by the further injunction, "shew thyself to the priest," is to be understood an opening of the mind to the consideration and reception of the good of heavenly love and life, which good was figured and represented by the priest under the Jewish law; and, lastly, by the injunction, "offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them," is to be understood the grateful and devout acknowledgment that all spiritual cleansing and purification, especially in the case of the profanation of Good and Truth, is the sole effect of the Divine Loving-kindness, and a proof most positive of the Divine Omnipotence.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn from it, in the first place, to adore that Divine Power and Goodness which, when manifested here on earth in a bodily form, was exercised on the bodies of men, by the removal of bodily disease and infirmity, and thus proves the original of that form to be from the Father of Mercies. And I learn from it, in the next place, to reflect with consolation and confidence, that the same Divine Power and Goodness is continually

flowing from the Glorified Body of the Great Redeemer, to remove all spiritual disease and infirmity, even that greatest of all distempers—the profanation of Good and Truth, in all cases where Divine Aid is supplicated out of an humble and a penitent heart for the purpose of removal. Lastly, I learn what are the qualifications to receive the healing gift of the Divine Mercy, and that they consist, first, in the acknowledgment of the Incarnate God in His Divine Humanity; and secondly, in the confidence that He hath Omnipotence; in other words, that He can do all things consistent with His own order, and with the laws of operation which He Himself hath been pleased to appoint. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to believe in this Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, and to apply to Him, and to Him alone, for relief under all my spiritual distempers, and never to despair of His Divine Aid, even though I should inadvertently offend against His holy laws, and thus incur the guilt of profaning them. AMEN.

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED.

MATT. viii. 5—13.

“And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “the centurion,” by “his servant,” and by “the palsy of which he was sick, and by which he was grievously tormented”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by the “centurion,” here recorded, is to be understood a Roman commander of a hundred soldiers; and by “his servant,” is to be understood one of his domestics employed in his service; and by the “palsy” with which he was afflicted, is further to be understood a bodily disease called by that name, and consisting in the want of a proper circulation of the blood in some part of the body, in consequence of which the part affected was rendered incapable of performing the functions for which it was

intended. But according to the spiritual idea which is involved in every part of this miracle, as well as of all the other miracles performed by the Great Redeemer, by the "centurion" above-mentioned, is to be understood the church among the Gentiles, and particularly the church combating against spiritual adversaries; for the centurion here spoken of was a Gentile soldier. Agreeably to the same spiritual idea, by this centurion's "servant" is to be understood some lower principle in the natural mind intended to administer to the higher principles of the spiritual mind; and, therefore, by the "palsy" with which the servant was afflicted, is to be understood a defect of truth in the lower principles of the natural mind, in consequence of which defect there was a want of circulation of heavenly life and love from the higher principles of the spiritual mind, which rendered the natural mind unable to perform the functions for which it was intended, particularly in the way of combat against the evil principles and false persuasions with which it was infected. It is accordingly said, concerning this servant, that he was "sick, and grievously tormented," because sickness has relation to the evils which were unsubdued and thus unremoved, whilst "grievous torment" has relation to the false persuasions originating in those evils.

Q. But it is added, that "Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him." What do you learn from these words of the Blessed Jesus?

A. I learn, not only His willingness to administer to the relief of the servant here recorded, but also His willingness to administer to the relief of all other His afflicted servants, who apply to Him out of pure and penitent hearts. It is, therefore, to be understood, and attentively considered, that Jesus is ever uttering this same expression, "I will come and heal him," over every individual child, or servant, labouring under any disease or sorrow, whether mental or corporeal. For the Great Redeemer is the same compassionate mercy yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and, consequently, as He was willing

in the days of His flesh to listen to the prayers of His afflicted children, and to relieve their distresses, so He is alike willing at this day, and alike in the act of coming, to remove the infirmities of all those who, like the good centurion of old, supplicate His Divine Power and Presence. It is to be remarked, further, concerning the two expressions, "coming" and "healing," that the former must in all cases precede the latter; in other words, that the Blessed Jesus cannot heal unless he be first allowed to come, and that healing, therefore, is to be regarded as the effect of His Divine Presence, and that, consequently, whosoever wishes to experience the power of His healing, must first labour to open his mind, and to keep it open, to the Divine Presence, favour, and benediction.

Q. But it is added, that "the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn from these words two necessary qualifications to secure the favour and blessing of the Holy Jesus, the first of which is humility, as manifested in these words, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof:" and the second is, confidence in Divine Aid, grounded in that humility, and expressed in these words, "speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

Q. And what instruction do you learn from the words which follow, where it is written, "for I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it"?

A. I learn a third qualification necessary to secure the favour and blessing of the Great Redeemer, which qualification consists in a well-arranged mind, resulting from the two former qualifications, humility and confidence in Divine Aid. For the soldiers, here spoken of

as being under the centurion, have reference to the subordinate principles of the natural mind, and to “say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it,” denotes the orderly arrangement of those principles. It is further to be observed concerning this arrangement, that to say to one, “Go, and he goeth,” denotes the first energy and effect of the will in the execution of any purpose; whilst to say to another, “Come, and he cometh,” denotes the excitation and presence of means in the understanding for the accomplishment of the same purpose; and “to say to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it,” denotes the effect, or the full accomplishment of the purpose in word and in work.

Q. But it follows, that “when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” What instruction do you further learn from these words?

A. By Jesus marvelling, I learn that the case of the centurion was singular and extraordinary; and by his saying, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,” I am further taught in what respect the case was both singular and extraordinary, viz., because the faith of the centurion was a faith not grounded in himself, but in the affection of charity, thus in the God from whom that affection is derived, on which account it is called a “great” faith, for the term great is always applied, according to the spiritual idea, to denote heavenly good, which is the good of love and charity. And since the faith which prevailed at that time in the Israelitish church was not of that description, being grounded in selfish and worldly love, and thus not in God, it is therefore added, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

Q. And what instruction do you further learn from the words which follow, where Jesus adds, “and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in

the kingdom of God. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" ?

A. By "many coming from the east and west," I am instructed in the call of the Gentiles into the Christian church, both of those who were in a state of more enlightened good, signified by the east, and of those who were in a state of more obscure good, signified by the west; and by "their sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God," I am further taught the several degrees of goodness and of blessedness to which they will be admitted, whilst some attain to a celestial degree, signified by Abraham, some to a spiritual degree, signified by Isaac, and some to a natural degree, signified by Jacob; in other words, while some become principled in love to the Lord, others in charity towards their neighbour, and, lastly, others in simple obedience to the truth, because they believe it to be their duty to live uprightly and sincerely one amongst another. For, according to any other idea, what can be meant by "sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God" ? And, again, by "the children of the kingdom being cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," I am further instructed that they who are principled in faith and truth alone, separate from a life of charity, or obedience to the truth, will be removed from all communion with the blessed, and plunged into a more terrible darkness than they who are ignorant of the truth, and will thus be deprived of all heavenly love and wisdom, and left a prey to every evil purpose and false principle, signified by "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Q. But it is lastly written that "Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." What is the instruction which you learn from these words ?

A. By Jesus saying to the centurion, "Go thy way," is to be understood Divine Exhortation to live according to

the great faith with which he was gifted ; for to go, and to go in a way, according to the spiritual idea, signifies to walk, or to live according to the knowledge of heavenly truth which has been received ; and, therefore, I am instructed by these words, that every one who has been blessed with the knowledge and belief of the Eternal Truth, ought to endeavour to form his life and love according to its heavenly dictates. By Jesus saying further, “ as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee,” I am again instructed that the Divine blessing, with its operation, attends every one, according to his faith ; in other words, according to the ruling persuasions of his mind, as grounded in his ruling love, if that love be in agreement with the Divine Will, and that for this plain reason, because those persuasions are in conjunction with the Eternal Truth, and the Eternal Truth is ever connected with Omnipotence, agreeably to which idea it is written in another place that “ all things are possible to him that believeth. Lastly, I am instructed by the concluding words, “ his servant was healed in the self-same hour,” that a Divine effect always attends a Divine intention and loving-kindness, in all cases where obstructions to its operation are removed, as in the present instance of the faithful centurion and his afflicted servant, and that thus the palsy is healed in all the lower principles of the human mind, whensoever the higher principles are opened, by genuine faith and love, to the reception of the Divine Mercy and its full operation.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. I learn, first, that there is a spiritual palsy as well as a natural one, and that a spiritual palsy consists in some spiritual obstruction in the mind and life, whereby the free circulation of heavenly love and wisdom is impeded, so that the mental faculties are not able to perform their proper functions, which functions consist in opposing evil and false principles, and in cherishing such as are in agreement with the Supreme Good and the Supreme Truth. I am instructed yet further, that no radical

cure is to be found for this spiritual palsy but in the Incarnate God, or in the Great Saviour, Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity, and not even in this God and Saviour, unless He be approached in a right faith, that is to say, with a faith grounded in love and charity, producing a right arrangement in all the subordinate powers and principles of the natural mind. I learn still further, from the above Divine miracle, that let the obstructions to heavenly life and love be ever so formidable, and the Divine circulation of blessing be ever so much impeded, yet if Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity be believed in and approached with a sincere heart, and in the spirit of true repentance, every obstruction will then soon be removed, which prevents the free circulation of His blessed influence, until at length the whole mind and life will be restored to their proper health and strength, by being enabled to comply willingly and freely with the Divine Operation. I am resolved, therefore, henceforth, whensoever I feel my own mind affected with a spiritual palsy, to apply immediately, like the faithful centurion above recorded, to my God and Saviour for His healing virtue, and to apply to Him with that living faith in His Divine Omnipotence for which the centurion was so eminently distinguished. I am resolved, also, to attend well to the operations of my own mind, that so all its powers and faculties may be brought into right arrangement, and thus rendered strong to withstand the assaults of evil and false principles, and eager and earnest to cherish all heavenly and holy influences. Lastly, I am resolved to believe confidently, that if my faith in my God and Saviour be grounded in His love and wisdom, it will then connect me perpetually with His Omnipotence, and through that Omnipotence every obstruction to the circulation of the Divine blessing will finally be removed, and I shall feel myself restored to the free exercise of every mental faculty, and to the happy perception of its close conjunction with the mercy, favour, peace, and blessedness of my Heavenly Father. AMEN.

PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER HEALED.

MATT. viii. 14, 15.

“And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “Jesus entering into Peter's house, and by His seeing Peter's wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever”?

A. These words have both a literal and a spiritual meaning, like the words of all the other miracles performed by the Lord, and according to the literal meaning they relate to Peter as a man, and to his wife's mother as to a person sick of a bodily disorder called a fever; but according to their spiritual meaning, they relate to Peter and to his wife's mother, as representing spiritual principles appertaining to the church, that is to say, to the members of the church at that period, and to the distemper with which the members of the church were then affected.

Q. And, according to the spiritual signification, what do you understand by “Jesus entering into Peter's house”?

A. By Peter, as an apostle, is represented the principle of faith in the church, and especially of that faith which acknowledges the Divinity of the Great Saviour, (see Matt. xvi. 13—20.) and by his house, therefore, are represented the interiors of that faith. Thus, by “Jesus entering Peter's house” is to be understood His Divine Influx into the interiors which constituted the faith of the church.

Q. What, then, do you understand, according to the spiritual idea, by "Peter's wife's mother," and what by "Jesus seeing her laid, and sick of a fever"?

A. According to the spiritual idea, by "Peter's wife's mother," is to be understood the affection in which the good of the faith of the church originates; and by "Jesus seeing her laid, and sick of a fever," is further to be understood Divine Inspection into that affection, and a consequent discovery of its being merely natural, and infested with evils of concupiscence: for by "Jesus seeing" is signified Divine Inspection; and by being "laid, and sick of a fever," is further denoted that the affection in which the good of the faith of the church originates, was immersed in merely natural love, and thus infested with the concupiscences originating in that love.

Q. But it is written that "Jesus touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them." What do you here conceive to be expressed by "Jesus touching her hand, and the fever leaving her"?

A. Agreeably to the above spiritual idea, by "Jesus touching her hand," is to be understood the communication of Divine Power to the affection in which the good of the faith of the church originates; and by "the fever leaving her," in consequence of that touch, is to be further understood that when that affection had communication opened with the Divine Power of the Lord, and became thus conjoined with His love, it was then immediately liberated from the concupiscences of evil which had before infested it, and was thus restored to its proper strength, purity, and activity.

Q. And what do you understand by "her arising, and ministering unto them"?

A. These words, like the foregoing, have both a literal and a spiritual meaning, and in their literal meaning they relate to "Peter's wife's mother," and to her arising out of her bed, and fulfilling her appointed duties; but in the spiritual sense, as applied to the affection in which the good of the faith of the church originates, they were

intended to record the elevation of that affection, and its consequent application to works of service and of use in the church. And since all spiritual elevation implies an elevation towards the Great and Holy God, and thus a conjunction of life with Him, and the performing of useful services under His Divine Influence, therefore, this also is to be understood by arising and ministering unto them.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle ?

A. I learn, in the first place, from its letter, or history, to adore that Divine Power by which the Great Saviour, at one and the same time, manifested His Divinity, and relieved the natural infirmities of his suffering creatures ; and from the interior contents of that letter, or history, I learn, in the next place, to acknowledge with equal adoration and gratitude the same Divine Power in its application to remove spiritual infirmity and disease. I learn, further, from the significant history of a bodily fever, to reflect on that more terrible mental fever in which it originates, and which it was intended to represent and make manifest, and to be continually upon my guard against its assaults and destructive effects. And since this mental fever consists in those concupiscences of the natural man, which infest and defile the affection of truth, or of a right faith, in the spiritual man, I am further instructed by the spiritual sense of this miracle to be continually on the watch against the infecting influence of those concupiscences, which all originate in self-love, and in an inordinate love of the world. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, through the Divine Grace and Mercy, to take heed to myself lest at any time the defiling influence of merely natural love should infect the higher principles of the life of my immortal spirit, and thus plunge me into that most terrible and dangerous, yet least dreaded of all disorders, a fever of the mind. Still, should it come to pass, through the weakness of my corrupt nature, that I shall, at any time, become the prey of such infection, I am resolved not to despair of

Divine aid and relief, but rather, in all humility of penitence and contrition, to throw myself at the feet of my Merciful Saviour, and to implore the healing power of His Divine Benediction. Thus may I hope, like Peter's wife's mother of old, who had the happiness to experience the blessed touch of her Saviour's hand, to be partaker of the same high privilege, and to receive from that touch the cure of all my spiritual maladies. And thus, too, like her, shall I also arise and minister; in other words, become elevated to an eternal conjunction of life with my God, and by virtue of that elevation, be enabled to perform all useful services to my fellow-creatures, to His glory and my own happiness. AMEN.

THE DEVILS CAST OUT.

MATT. viii. 16, 17.

“When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “the even coming”?

A. By the “even coming,” according to the sense of the letter, is to be understood the close of the natural day, or the time when the sun sets to this lower world of nature; but according to the spiritual idea contained under the letter, by the “even coming” is to be understood a state of obscure faith and love in the church, or the close of the spiritual day, when the Sun of Heaven sets on benighted mortals, in consequence of their want of faith in the brightness of His rays, and their want of love for that heavenly warmth which these rays inspire.

Q. And what do you conceive to be here meant by the “possessed of devils”?

A. By devils are to be understood the spirits and powers of darkness in the infernal world; and by being possessed of these devils, according to the sense of the letter, is to be understood the possession which these spirits and powers took at that time of the bodies of men; for such at that time was the deplorable state of the Jewish church, in its departure from God and His kingdom, that the infernal inhabitants entered even into the corporeal part of man, and ruled it at pleasure. But by being possessed of devils, according to the spiritual idea,

is to be understood the possession which the infernal powers take of the souls of men, by virtue of which possession they obtain entire government over the thoughtless and impenitent, and rule them with the iron rod of diabolical malice and agency. For such is the awful situation of man in this lower world, that he is placed as it were between two kingdoms, the kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of darkness, which is the kingdom of the enemy of God, called the devil and satan; the devil, by reason of the diabolical evil by which he is impelled to all kind of mischief; and satan, by reason of the false principles in which that evil works and effects its mischievous purposes. Moreover, the inhabitants of both these kingdoms have access to man, and he becomes of necessity associated with the one or the other, according to his ruling love, that is to say, according as he is desirous to submit himself to the government of the Divine Love and Wisdom of God, or to govern himself, by exalting his own will and wisdom above the will and wisdom of the Most High. It is further to be remarked concerning such association, that man acquires a life and a form according to it,—an angelic life and form if his association be angelic, but an infernal life and form if his association be infernal. Jesus Christ accordingly declares, concerning the wicked and unbelieving Jews, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” (John viii. 44.)

Q. Can you assign any reason why the possessed of devils were brought to Jesus “when the even was come”?

A. Yes, if the “even” be understood according to the spiritual idea above expressed, as denoting the absence of good and of truth in the church; for whensoever this is the case, then the members of the church must of necessity become a prey to evil and error, and of course must be “possessed of devils,” because wheresoever evil and error are, there the powers of darkness, called the devil and satan, must have their abode. It is only, therefore, in the “even,” according to its spiritual meaning, that mankind can become possessed of devils, and thus brought unto Jesus for deliverance.

Q. But it follows, that "He cast out the spirits with His Word, and healed all that were sick." What do you understand by Jesus casting out the spirits with His Word?

A. By the spirits here spoken of are to be understood the powers of darkness, who have their abodes in all man's natural evils and errors; and by the Word of Jesus Christ is to be understood the complex of His Divine Love and Wisdom brought down into the letter, or literal expression. By Jesus casting out the spirits with His Word is consequently to be understood the removal of evil and of error through the implantation, the growth, and fruitfulness of heavenly love and wisdom, or, what amounts to the same, of heavenly goodness and truth. It is not, therefore, to be understood that Jesus cast out the spirits by the mere sound of His voice, or by any extraordinary act of Divine Authority or Omnipotence separate from His Divine Love and Wisdom, for evil can never be supplanted but by good, nor can error be supplanted but by truth, and, therefore, it is to be understood that the voice of the Blessed Jesus operated to the casting out of the spirits by virtue of the Omnipotence of His Divine Love and Wisdom, as formed and contained in it. Hence, then, may be discovered the obligation imposed on every one who is desirous of experiencing in his own mind the casting out of the powers of darkness, to cherish carefully in himself the contrary powers of heavenly love and wisdom, or goodness and truth, from a firm conviction that one opposite can never be cast out but by another, in like manner as darkness can never be cast out but by light, nor cold but by heat.

Q. And what do you conceive to be meant by the words which follow, "and healed all that were sick"?

A. By the sick, according to the spiritual sense of the miracle, are here meant those who are spiritually sick, and they are all those who are distempered in their understanding, by reason of the influence of false persuasions and perverted thoughts. By healing the sick, therefore, is to be understood the removal of such false principles and perverted thoughts by the insemination

and growth of heavenly truth and knowledge. This operation of healing the sick accordingly follows that of casting out the spirits, because by the spirits are meant the spirits of evil infecting the will of man with disorderly love; and until these spirits are cast out, it is impossible the sick can be healed, since, if the love be disorderly in the will, it must of necessity give birth to false persuasions in the understanding; but no sooner is evil extirpated from the will, than error is at the same time extirpated from the understanding, and thus the sick are healed.

Q. But it is added, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." How do you understand these words?

A. By these words I am instructed that all the miracles wrought by the Blessed Jesus were of Divine prediction, and that thus the prophetic Word and the evangelical are in the most perfect harmony, and accord with each other; the latter being the accomplishment of the former, in the person of the Incarnate God. By this God "taking our infirmities and bearing our sicknesses," I am further instructed that He subjected Himself to the assault of all those evils and errors which infest the nature of man, and which are in connexion with the powers of darkness, to the intent that he might finally subdue those powers, and deliver man from their tyrannical usurpation. Mention is accordingly made both of infirmities and sicknesses, because infirmities relate to the disorders of evil in the human will, whilst sicknesses have relation to the disorders resulting from false principles in the understanding.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn, in the first place, to adore the power of that Incarnate God, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, both in the heart, in the understanding, and in the operation of man, by delivering the heart from the love of evil, and the understanding from

the darkness of error, and the operation from the mischievous effects of both. I learn, in the next place, to venerate that Holy Word, which proceeds from this Incarnate God, and is embodied in the letter or literal sense of the Divine Records, and to regard it as the grand complex of the Divine Will and Wisdom let down from heaven for the use of man, by forming in him the same heavenly love and wisdom with which itself is filled. I learn, also, that the Incarnate God effects all His saving purposes by the instrumentality of this His Holy Word. I learn, further, that so far as I deliberately cherish any evil or error, in the same proportion I admit into myself infernal agency, and by degrees become a living form of diabolical influence, from which I can never by any possibility be delivered but through the reception of the eternal truth, producing in me the blessed truths of repentance, of faith in Jesus Christ, and of a holy life according to His Divine Precepts. I learn, lastly, to adore that Divine Mercy which was pleased, in the fulness of time, to assume a body of flesh, and in that body to submit to all the assaults of the powers of darkness, for the purpose of subduing them, and thus removing them from man. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to take Jesus Christ for my only God and Saviour, by believing that He alone has power to deliver me from my natural evils, and thus from infernal association and usurpation. I am resolved, also, to venerate His Holy Word, by believing it to proceed from Him, and to contain in its inmost bosom all the fulness of His Love and Wisdom, by virtue of which it is in continual close connexion with Him. Lastly, I am resolved to cherish this Holy Word in my heart, my understanding, and my life, from a full conviction that I can never attain any ascendancy over my own natural evils, and thus over the powers of darkness, only so far as the heavenly goods and truths of the Eternal Word are implanted and bring forth their blessed fruits in my life and conversation. AMEN.

THE WINDS AND WAVES REBUKED.

MATT. viii. 23—27.

“And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!”

Q. What do you understand, heré, by “Jesus entering into a ship, and His disciples following Him”?

A. By “Jesus entering into a ship, and His disciples following Him,” is to be understood, according to the literal sense of the history, that He and His disciples entered into a natural ship, such as floats on the natural waters of the sea; but according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood that they entered into what is signified and represented by a ship, and this is nothing else but the knowledge of what is good and true, as derived from the Holy Word; since what a ship is as to its natural use and service, that the knowledge of what is good and true is as to its spiritual use and service.

Q. Can you prove to me, from the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, that ships have such a spiritual meaning and signification?

A. Yes; it is said in the prophecy of Balaam, in reference to the Gospel dispensation, that “ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict

Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever ;" (Num. xxiv. 24.) where it must be evident to every considerate person that by ships are not meant ships, but the knowledges of good and truth derived from the Word of God, which were to oppose and overturn the reasonings of the natural man, signified by Asshur and Eber. It is written again in the prophet Isaiah, where he is speaking, in like manner, of the Lord's Advent, and of its extraordinary effects, that "the day of the Lord should be upon all the ships of Tarshish ;" (chap. ii. 16.) where it is again manifest that by ships cannot be meant ships, but the knowledges of good and truth, and in the opposite sense the knowledges of what is evil and false, which were to be supplanted at the appearing of the Incarnate God. To the same purport it is written in the Revelation concerning the destruction of Babylon, or of the corrupt church signified by Babylon, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness !" (ch. xviii. 19.) from which words it is again plain that by ships are not meant ships, but the doctrinals taught in that corrupt church.

Q. But it is said on this occasion, that "there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves." What do you conceive to be meant by the tempest here spoken of, and by "the ship being covered with the waves" ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by the tempest is to be understood a natural tempest, or storm, and by "the ship being covered with waves," is to be understood the natural effect of that tempest, or storm, in covering the ship with the waters of the sea. But according to the spiritual idea, by a tempest is to be understood a spiritual tempest, which is no other than the agitation and perturbation of the natural man, occasioned by the knowledges of good and truth derived from the Word of God, which are here treated of. For, in regard to those knowledges, the case is this, that when they are first communicated to the natural man, they disturb him

in his natural loves, and thus cause what is called spiritual trial, trouble, or temptation, here called a tempest. And by the ship being "covered with the waves" is therefore to be understood that the knowledges of heavenly good and truth were obscured by the agitation and perturbation of the natural man, signified by the waves.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written "that He was asleep"?

A. The sleep here spoken of, according to the spiritual idea, has reference to the state of the natural man under the agitation and perturbation which is here described. For when the natural man is in such a state, then Jesus appears to be asleep; in other words, His Divine presence is not noted or attended to, being immersed in the distracted affections and thoughts of the natural mind. Sleep, therefore, in such case, is ascribed to the Blessed Jesus, in like manner as anger and wrath are ascribed to Him, when yet they are only appearances, arising from the evil and false principles which prevail in the mind of man, leading him to suppose that, because he is against God, therefore God is against him. Thus Jesus is said to be asleep when in reality the sleep appertains only to man, who is pronounced to be asleep when he thinks naturally and not spiritually,—that is to say, when his understanding is immersed in the things of nature, and not awake to the perception and enjoyment of things spiritual and eternal.

Q. But it is added, that "His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish." What do you understand by these words?

A. By the disciples coming to Him is to be understood that their affections were excited towards Him, because every man comes or goes, according to the state of his ruling affection. If, therefore, that affection be directed towards Jesus Christ, man is then said to come to that Great and Holy God, as, on the other hand, he goes away from that God whensoever his affection grows cold towards Him, by being fixed on inferior objects. And as by coming to Jesus Christ is thus to be understood a

state of the ruling affection, so by awaking Him is to be further understood a state of the ruling thought, or a state of the understanding in its elevation upwards towards things spiritual and eternal, agreeably to what was just now observed concerning Jesus being asleep. This state of elevated affection and elevated thought is further described in these words, which the disciples spoke on the occasion, "Lord, save us; we perish:" for by the prayer, "Lord, save us," is evidently described a state of elevated affection; and by the additional words, "we perish," is as evidently denoted a state of elevated thought, since without such a state it would have been impossible for them to discern the danger and destruction which threatened them.

Q. And what do you conceive to be meant by the words which next follow, where it is written, "He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith"?

A. By the interesting question, "Why are ye fearful"? the Blessed Jesus intended to lead His disciples to explore in their own minds the cause and origin of fear, that so they might discover that all fear hath its source in mere natural affection and thought separate from spiritual affection and thought; and therefore He adds, "O ye of little faith," by which words He manifestly points out a defect of those spiritual principles. For all faith, properly so called, is the complex of spiritual affection and spiritual thought, since, if spiritual affection be wanting, it is impossible to suppose that there can be any true faith; and in like manner, if spiritual thought be wanting, the principle of faith cannot be supposed to exist. When, therefore, the Blessed Jesus applied the words of censure, "O ye of little faith," He manifestly designed to instruct His disciples, and through them all succeeding generations of mankind, that fear is the constant result of the want or weakness of heavenly principles in the human mind, in consequence of which want or weakness the mind is separated from that Divine Strength and Omnipotence, in which all true courage originates, and is left a prey to all those fears and

alarms, which beset the natural mind in such state of separation, by plunging it into a dreadful association with the powers of darkness, of terror, and of dismay.

Q. But it is added, that "then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." What do you understand by these words?

A. By Jesus arising is to be understood, according to the spiritual idea, His exaltation in the minds of His disciples as the Supreme Good and the Supreme Truth, for God can never be said to arise in any other sense than this. When, therefore, the Psalmist says, "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered," he manifestly prays for such an exaltation of God, that is to say, of His Divine love and wisdom in his own mind and life, by virtue of which he might experience power over all his spiritual enemies. It is accordingly added in the history of this miracle, that when "Jesus arose, He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm," because to rebuke the winds and the sea denotes the exercise of His Omnipotence in subduing the infernal influence signified by the wind, and the evils and errors of the natural man signified by the sea, which exercise is to be considered as the result of His arising, in other words, of His being exalted to the supreme place in the affections and thoughts of His disciples. It is, therefore, to be well understood, that infernal influence, evil, and error, can never be removed in man until the Blessed Jesus is first exalted in his mind and life, but that no sooner does such exaltation take place, than presently the wind and the sea are rebuked, and the agitations and perturbations of the natural man give place to the tranquil and composing principles operative from the Great Redeemer in the spirit of man. Thus, as it is here recorded, there is a great calm, because the great calm here spoken of has relation to the gentle and pacific rule of heavenly principles and persuasions in the human mind on the removal of the contrary principles and persuasions suggested by the powers of darkness, and it is called a great calm to denote its Divine origin, as having

its source in the operation of the Divine mercy and love, for the term great is always applied to denote that operation.

Q. But it is further written, that “the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” What particular instruction do you learn from these words?

A. By “the men marvelling,” I am taught what is the genuine effect on human minds, resulting from the display of the Divine Omnipotence in removing infernal influence in the natural man, and that this effect is the acknowledgment of that Omnipotence, or of a Divine Power infinitely exceeding all human agency whatsoever, for, to marvel, according to the spiritual idea, is to recognise such a power. It accordingly follows that “they said, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” by which words it is evident that they began to regard the Blessed Jesus as a being more than human, and even as Divine, since no other than a Divine Being can be supposed to exercise control over the winds and the sea, and especially over what is signified and represented by the winds and the sea, viz., the tempestuous influences of the powers of darkness operating on the disorderly passions and appetites of the natural man. When, therefore, the men exclaimed, “What manner of man is this?” it is the same thing as if they had said, “This man can be no other than the Great and Holy God. Thus the first disciples were convinced by this miracle of the Supreme Divinity of their Lord and Master, and thus too all future disciples may be convinced of the same Divinity, whensoever they observe in themselves the turbulence of unruly passions subdued, and in their place the tranquillity, the peace and gentleness restored, which ever flow from the admission of the meek and mild Spirit of the Holy Jesus.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn to adore, in the first place, the Divine Agency by which the Almighty has been pleased to manifest His absolute control over the elements of nature;

and in the next place to adore the same Divine Agency, as exercised upon the higher elements of human minds. I learn, further, to trace up that agency to the Incarnate God, so as to behold in His Divine Humanity all the fulness of Deity and of Omnipotence. I am instructed yet further, by the spiritual sense of this miracle, to look up to that Incarnate God for protection under all my spiritual trials and temptations, and especially for deliverance from the "winds and waves" of my own boisterous passions, excited by the destructive influence of the powers of darkness. Lastly, I am taught that in such perturbation and tempests of the natural mind, the Blessed Jesus frequently appears to be asleep, and that He can only be awakened by fervent prayer arising from a mind sensible of its danger and of its inability to be its own deliverer. I am resolved, therefore, henceforth, in all my spiritual trials and troubles, to apply to, and put my whole trust in, the Holy Jesus, and then I may humbly hope that He will arise, and rebuke the winds and the sea, so as to produce a great calm in my disturbed mind. Then, too, shall I also be led to marvel at the Omnipotence of His operations, and to answer the interesting question, "What manner of man is this," by the devout and grateful acknowledgment that He is God over all, blessed for ever, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending of all spiritual life, power, protection, benediction, and salvation; to whom be ascribed all praise, honour, and glory, for ever! AMEN.

THE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS COMING OUT OF THE TOMBS.

MATT. viii. 28—34.

“And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And He said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.”

Q. How do you understand the miracle here recorded, according to its literal sense?

A. According to the literal sense of this miracle are to be understood two men who, as to their bodies, were possessed or obsessed by infernal spirits, coming out from amongst the filth and impurity of sepulchres, and so exceedingly fierce and ungovernable, that it was unsafe for any one to come near them. And by the devils requesting to be permitted to enter into the herd of swine, and by the herd, when such permission was granted, running down a steep place into the sea, and perishing in the waters, is further to be understood, that the devils find

delight in entering into the bodies of unclean animals, and then in instigating those animals to their own destruction.

Q. And how do you understand this miracle according to its spiritual sense, or according to that sense which is veiled under the letter ?

A. According to the spiritual sense, by two are not to be understood two men, but two principles ; and by their being possessed of devils and meeting Jesus, is further to be understood that those principles were in connexion with the power of darkness, and thus in opposition to the Holy Jesus, that is to say, to His Divine Love and Divine Wisdom. And by their “coming out of the tombs,” is further to be understood their issuing forth from their infernal abodes ; and by their being “exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way,” is further described the violence of their opposition to the Eternal Truth, so that it was impossible for any truth to be manifested before them. According to this sense, therefore, by the “devils beseeching Jesus to suffer them to enter into the herd of swine, and by Jesus permitting them,” is further to be understood, that infernal spirits take delight in infesting both the bodies and minds of men, and that when, by the Word of the Great Redeemer, they are expelled from the minds of the humble and the penitent, they then take refuge, and this by Divine Permission, in the minds of those who are here figured by the swine, that is to say, of the sordidly sensual and avaricious, who, under their infernal influence, descend rapidly into the infernal pit, and there perish in the polluted waters of all infernal persuasions.

Q. And what do you conceive the two principles to be which are described as “possessed of devils and meeting Jesus” ?

A. By these two principles are to be understood the principle of evil in the human will, and the principle of error in the human understanding, both of them in connexion with infernal agency ; and by their “meeting Jesus,” is further described a trial, or temptation, which

the Saviour of the World endured from the powers of darkness operating in His infirm humanity, before it was fully Glorified, or made Divine.

Q. But it is written, that "the devils cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" What do you understand by these words?

A. By "the devils crying out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?" is to be understood the vehemence of their opposition to the principles of the Divine Love and Wisdom, notwithstanding their conviction that those principles were incarnate in the Blessed Jesus. By the same words, therefore, is described the torment under which they laboured through the opposition between their wills and their understandings, since with their understandings they knew the truth, but with their wills they hated and rejected it. They therefore exclaim, "Art Thou come hither to torment us [or, as it is expressed in the original, to explore us] before the time?" to denote, that the manifestation of the Divine Truth was to them a source of the most exquisite pangs, because it was in opposition to their ruling love, and that, consequently, nothing is more painful to a wicked infernal being than to have his purposes and thoughts thus exposed to the scrutinising light of the Divine Intelligence.

Q. You have already told me what is to be understood by the herd of swine, and by the devils requesting permission to enter into them. Can you explain to me what is further to be understood by the words of the Blessed Jesus, where it is written, "He said unto them, Go"?

A. The significant term "Go," involves in it the whole of the Divine Will respecting the powers of darkness, which is, that they be eternally separated from Him, His kingdom, and His children, so as to be incapable of doing any mischief either to the Great Father of Being or to His happy family. Under every spiritual trial, therefore, stirred up by the powers of darkness in

the minds of the humble and the penitent, the Great Saviour is ever uttering the same authoritative command, "Go," and the effect of this Divine Word is, to remove those powers from their usurped abode, that they may enter into minds congenial to their own, and precipitate them into their own infernal kingdom.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle ?

A. I learn, again, to adore that Divine Power, which was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and overturn their empire, whether established in the bodies or in the souls of men. I learn, also, from the above miracle, that the powers of darkness are in direct opposition to the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ, and that their greatest torment consists in being explored by the light of the Divine Truth, and in the discovery thus made of their secret purposes, thoughts, and devices. I am also further instructed, that a single word uttered by the Great Saviour is able to put to flight a host of infernals, and that the Saviour is ever uttering such a word of salvation in the hearts of all His penitent and suffering children. Lastly, I learn to tremble under the idea of the effect of infernal influence, and of those defiled concupiscences in which it operates, since this effect is nothing less than a rapidity of motion downwards, hurrying its miserable subjects from the realms of bliss, to perish everlastingly in the disturbed waters of impiety and iniquity. I am resolved, therefore, henceforth, to be upon my guard against such infernal agency, and for this purpose to endeavour, through Divine Mercy, to keep my mind pure from all defiled affections and concupiscences. Thus, under the assault of all my spiritual enemies, I may hope to hear the authoritative word, "Go," pronounced against them by my God and Saviour, and may thus behold every infernal power cast out, and the Blessed Jesus glorified in their separation, and in the consequent salvation of His humble and grateful child. Thus, too, I shall be preserved from imitating the folly and wickedness of the

people amongst whom the above miracle was wrought, and of whom it is written, that "when they saw Jesus, they besought Him to depart out of their coasts," since, by the experience which I have of the Omnipotence and miraculous energy of my God and Saviour in my own bosom, I shall be led to cleave to Him the more closely, and to beseech Him the more earnestly, not to depart, but rather to take up His eternal abode in my purified and grateful bosom. AMEN.

THE SICK OF THE PALSY HEALED.

MATT. IX. 2—8.

“ And; behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed : and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and walk ? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.”

You have already told me, in the explanation of a former miracle, what is to be understood both naturally and spiritually by the “sick of the palsy,” and that it implies some obstruction to the circulation of the blood in the body, and of truth in the mind, in consequence of which both the corporeal and mental organs are rendered incapable of performing their proper functions. Can you now tell me why the “sick of the palsy,” as here recorded, is described as “lying on a bed” ?

A. The reason is, because a bed, according to its spiritual signification, figures and represents the natural principle of the life of man, since what a literal bed is to the body of a man, that the natural principle is to the spirit of a man. For man, it is well known, or may be known, consists of two distinct principles, the one natural, the other spiritual ; in other words, the one

formed to be affected by, and to take cognizance of the things of this world; and the other formed to be affected by, and to take cognizance of the things of another world, viz., God, His law, His kingdom, His providence, His perfections, and the relationship subsisting between Him and His creatures. Agreeably, then, to this idea, the natural principle, as being the lowest, may be regarded as the bed of the spiritual principle, which is above it, because the spiritual principle rests upon, and finds its repose in, the natural, in like manner as the body of man rests upon, and finds its repose in, a literal bed. That bed hath such a spiritual signification, may be plain from these passages, in the Holy Word, where it is mentioned. Thus, it is written in the book of Psalms—"Commune with your own heart upon your bed;" (Psalm iv. 4.) and again, "he deviseth mischief upon his bed;" (Psalm xxxvi. 4.) and again, "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" (Psalm xli. 3.) and again, "When I remember Thee upon my bed;" (Psalm lxiii. 6.) and again, in Isaiah, "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it;" (chap. xxviii. 20.) in all which passages, by bed is not meant a bed literally, but the natural mind, or principle, on which the spiritual mind, or principle, rests, and in which it thinks. The awful sentence, therefore, against Jezebel was denounced in these words, "Behold, I will cast her into a bed," (Rev. ii. 22.) to denote that she would be left to the natural mind, or principle, and to its false persuasions.

It deserves, however, to be noted, that the spiritual bed, here spoken of, varies according to the state of the natural principle, being a soft and easy bed if the natural principle be brought into right subordination to the spiritual; but a hard and uneasy bed, if such subordination be wanting. By the "sick of the palsy," therefore, "lying on a bed," is to be understood the connexion of the spiritual principle with the natural; and that in this connexion there was some obstruction, which prevented

the due circulation of spiritual principles and persuasions in the natural life and its principles and persuasions.

Q. But it is said, that "Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." What is it you understand by these words of the Blessed Jesus, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee"?

A. Jesus, in calling the sick of the palsy His son, announces His Divine parental affection to all His dis-tempered and suffering children, and this is language at once the most tender, most consolatory, and most encouraging. When He says again to this son, "Be of good cheer," He meant to announce, further, the presence and comfort of His own mercy and love, since it is impossible that a man can be "of good cheer," [or, as it is expressed in the original, "have confidence,"] by any other means than the communication and reception of the Divine favour and loving-kindness. And again, when He pronounces, "thy sins be forgiven thee," He meant to declare the saving blessed effect of such favour and loving-kindness, in removing and separating all the principles of sin and disorder, thus in purifying the affections and thoughts from all the defilement of iniquity, and finally restoring the whole man, with all his principles, both natural and spiritual, to the order, the image, the peace, and blessing of God and of heaven.

Q. But it is added, that "certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn that sinful men, especially if their sin be strengthened and supported by human learning, and what are commonly called great talents, are ever ready to misinterpret the words of the Most High, and to call His wisdom, foolishness, and the declaration of His mercy, blasphemy. I learn, further, an additional proof of the Divinity of my Saviour, manifested so evidently in His discernment of the thoughts of those with whom

he was conversing ; for who but the Only God can possess such discernment ? Lastly, from the significant question, “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ?” I am taught to reflect, not only that all evil thoughts proceed from a corrupt heart, but also that they are in themselves most unreasonable and groundless, being nothing more or less than oppositions to the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Most High God.

Q. But the Blessed Jesus adds, as a proof of the unreasonableness of such evil thoughts, “Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and walk ?” What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of this significant question ?

A. My Saviour would instruct me by this significant question, that to forgive sins and to cure bodily diseases, are acts which equally require the exercise of Divine Omnipotence, and that, consequently, the supernatural cure of a bodily disease implies the power to cure a mental disease. He would instruct me, therefore, to regard all His healing operations, exercised on the bodies of men, as proofs most positive of His Divine Power to exercise similar operations on the souls, or spirits, of men. And the reason is plain, because sin, properly considered, is nothing but a distemper of the soul ; and to forgive sin, therefore, [or, as it is expressed in the original, to remit it,] means nothing more or less than to remove that distemper. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, by every act of healing exercised on the bodies of men, gave a full demonstration of His Divine Power to heal their souls, or spirits ; in other words, to forgive sins : to which purpose He declares afterwards, “But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

Q. And what do you conceive to be involved in the words, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house ?”

A. The injunction to “arise,” involves in it, spiritually, an elevation of the affections and thoughts, or of the will

and understanding, from earthly things to heavenly; in other words, from self-love and the love of the world to the love of God and neighbourly love. The injunction again, "take up thy bed," involves in it a similar elevation of the natural mind, with all its purposes, words, and works, agreeably to what was said above concerning the spiritual signification of the term "bed." And, lastly, the injunction, "go unto thine house," spiritually considered, involves in it a Divine exhortation to the sick of the palsy, and thus to every distempered child of man, to retire into the interiors of his own mind, where the Most High has His consecrated abode, and there to dwell continually in the enjoyment of the Divine Presence, Favour, and Benediction of the God who healeth all his infirmities.

Q. In the conclusion it is said, "that he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." What do you learn from these words?

A. By the sick of the palsy arising, and departing to his house, I am taught to discern the effect of the Divine Word of the Most High, produced in the ultimates of nature. For such is the quality of the Divine Intention and Thought, which is the same thing with the Divine Word or Speech, that it ever proceeds to its effect, which effect terminates in the ultimates of the natural world, and from thence returns, by re-action, to its Divine Source. And from the multitude marvelling at the sight of the effect, and glorifying God which had given such power unto men, I am further instructed in the true disposition and genuine character of the followers of the Blessed Jesus, that is to say, of the real living members of His church and kingdom, viz., that they adore with wonder the effects of His Omnipotence, in removing the disorders both of body and mind, and thus of restoring man to his original purity, order, and life; and, further, that they refer these effects to the union of the Divine and Human Nature in the person of the Incarnate God, and thus worship Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity as One

with the Eternal Father, consequently as the Supreme and Only God, who hath all power both in heaven and earth.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. I learn, again, to adore the power of that merciful God and Saviour, which I find exercised in healing the bodily infirmities of mankind. But I learn, still more, to adore that same Divine Power as applied to the removal of spiritual infirmity and distemper, and as expressing itself in the Divine consolatory words—"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." From the account, too, of the above miracle, I receive an additional confirmation of my faith in the Divinity of my Lord and Saviour, of whom I find it written, that He knew the thoughts of those with whom He conversed, for such knowledge is a peculiar characteristic of Divinity, and, consequently, a demonstration that the person possessing it could be no other than the Supreme God. Again, I learn that the power of healing bodily disease involves in it, of necessary consequence, the power of healing spiritual disease, and that, therefore, the Blessed Jesus, in controlling the disorders of matter, exhibited a proof most positive that the kingdom of mind also was subject to His authority, and that of course He was able likewise to control all its disorders, and to restore it to its proper health, vigour, and enjoyment. Lastly, I learn what is the true temper and spirit of the followers of this Incarnate God, or of the members of His church and kingdom, and that their minds are continually filled with wonder and adoration at observing the effects of His Mercy and Omnipotence as exhibited both in matter and in mind, and further, that they are led by those effects to the acknowledgment of the Incarnate God, and to the devout worship of Him in His Divine Humanity, thus in His Oneness with the Eternal Father. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to take this God for my God, and to believe in and follow Him, as the Restorer of the breach in all the principles both of my body

and of my mind. So may I humbly hope, in all my sorrows and infirmities, to hear from His Divine mouth the consolatory words, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee ;” and penetrated with a lively and grateful sense of the mercy and power of these Divine words, I may finally experience their blessed efficacy in enabling me to “arise, and take up my bed, and go to my house.” AMEN.

THE RULER'S DAUGHTER RAISED.

MATT. ix. 18—26.

“While He spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “a certain ruler and his daughter”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by “a certain ruler” is to be understood a person who was in authority amongst the Jews; and by “his daughter” is to be understood his daughter according to the flesh; but agreeably to the spiritual sense of this miracle, by “a certain ruler” is to be understood the church, or the members of the church, principled in heavenly truths, from which comes all spiritual rule or dominion; and by “his daughter,” in agreement with the same sense, is to be understood the affection derived from that truth, for such, in the language of inspiration, is the signification of the term

daughter, and, therefore, so frequent mention is made of the "daughter of Zion," the "daughter of Jerusalem," and the "daughter of the uncircumcised," denoting the affection of good, the affection of truth, and the opposite affections of evil and of error.

Q. What, then, do you understand by this ruler's daughter being dead, according to this spiritual signification of the term?

A. By being dead, according to the sense of the letter, is to be understood natural death, or the separation of the soul from the body; but by being dead, according to the spiritual sense, is to be understood spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from the life of the love of God, and its consequent immersion in the unclean loves of self and of the world. When, therefore, it is said by the ruler, "My daughter is even now dead," it is to be understood that the affection of truth was thus separated from heavenly love, and thereby immersed in unclean loves.

Q. But it is added, concerning the ruler, that "he said unto Jesus, Come, and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." What do you conceive to be implied in these words?

A. They are words expressive of a strong faith in the Divinity of the Great Saviour, and are, therefore, recorded for the instruction and benefit of the church in all succeeding ages. For when the ruler says, "Come," in application to the Great Saviour, he manifestly intended to supplicate His Divine Presence, Mercy, and Benediction; and when he added, "lay Thy hand upon her," he meant, further, to supplicate a communication with the Divine Omnipotence; and lastly, when he concludes, "she shall live," he expresses a strong confidence in the effect of such communication, by restoring a dead affection to the newness of heavenly life, vigour, and enjoyment.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, that "Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples?"

A. According to the sense of the letter, by these words is to be understood, that Jesus and His disciples rose up, and followed the ruler to his house; but according to the spiritual sense, by Jesus “arising,” is to be understood the elevation of His Humanity to a closer and fuller union with His Divinity, agreeably to the process by which He gradually made His Humanity Divine, by uniting it fully with the Eternal Father in Himself. This Divine process is called His Glorification, agreeably to His own words, where He says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified,” and in another place, “Father, glorify Thy name.” And by His “following” the ruler, is to be understood, according to the same sense, the intenseness of His love to fulfil the desire which He had before implanted in the ruler’s mind. It is added, “and so did His disciples,” to denote that Jesus and His disciples are always united, because His disciples are all those who admit into their wills and understandings His Divine Love and Wisdom.

Q. But it is written, that “when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth: and they laughed Him to scorn.” What do you understand by these words?

A. These words, like the foregoing, have their spiritual as well as their literal meaning, and according to their spiritual interpretation, by Jesus “coming into the ruler’s house,” is signified His Divine influx into the minds of those who are represented by the ruler, viz., such as are principled in the knowledge of the Eternal Truth, but without that affection which the truth is calculated to produce. And by His seeing the “minstrels, and the people making a noise,” is further signified, according to the same sense, His Divine inspection of the disorderly state of their affections and thoughts; for by the “minstrels” are spiritually denoted the things relating to the will; and by “the people,” the things relating to the understanding; and by their “making a noise,” is signified the disorderly and disturbed state of both.

Again, by His saying unto them, "Give place ; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth," is to be understood, His Divine control over that disorder and disturbance, that so He might restore the affection of truth to its proper state of vigour and of activity, inasmuch as it was not really dead, or voluntarily and deliberately immersed in evil love, but asleep ; in other words, immersed for a time, and unintentionally, in merely natural appetites and affections. And by their "laughing Him to scorn," is further to be understood, that they were incapable of apprehending this distinction between death and sleep, and therefore made light of it, as a distinction not worth attending to.

Q. It is lastly written, that "when the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land." How do you understand these words ?

A. By "the people being put forth," is to be understood the separation of disorderly thoughts ; and by "His going in, and taking her by the hand," is to be understood His Divine influx into the affection of truth, and a communication thereby of Divine power ; and by "the maid arising," is further to be understood the elevation of that affection out of the natural affections and appetites in which it had been immersed. Lastly, by "the fame thereof going forth into all that land," is denoted the church's acknowledgment of a Divine supernatural agency, proceeding from the Humanity of the Incarnate God.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. I learn, again, to adore the Divine Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, as exercised in the double kingdom of matter and of mind ; of matter, by raising up to life a dead body ; and of mind, by elevating, out of unclean loves, a mental affection. I learn, further, to distinguish, in myself, between an affection which is dead, and an affection which is asleep, and to see that the latter is capable of admitting Divine influx and power, and thus of being raised out of sleep ; in other words,

of being elevated out of the natural state into which it was fallen, into a spiritual one of life and of peace. Lastly, I learn, that before the Blessed Jesus can operate to advantage, either on body or on mind, "the people must be put forth;" in other words, the rabble of unruly and disorderly thoughts must be separated, that so the healing virtues of the Divine Mercy and Omnipotence may be admitted. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to apply to this my God and Saviour, under all my spiritual infirmities, and especially under that sleep of good affections which, if deliberately indulged in, may prove fatal to my everlasting happiness. And, further, I am resolved, in my application for Divine aid, to endeavour to bring my mind into a state capable of receiving it, by expelling all those purposes, affections, and tumultuous thoughts, which have a tendency to banish the Blessed Jesus from me, and to render ineffectual the Divine power of His healing love and wisdom. Amen.

THE BLOODY ISSUE CURED.

MATT. IX. 20—22.

“And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years?”

A. By the woman, here spoken of, is figured the church, as it existed at that time amongst the Jews; and by her being “diseased with an issue of blood,” is denoted the state of that church in regard to the falsification of truth, and the overflow of such falsification. For, by blood, in a good sense, is signified the Divine Truth proceeding from the Great Redeemer, and of which it is written, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” (John vi. 53.) But, in an opposite sense, by blood is signified violence offered to truth, in consequence of which it is falsified, by being compelled to confirm the principles of evil in the human mind; according to which sense of the word, it is written in the prophet, “Your hands are full of blood;” (Isa. i. 15.) and in the Revelation, “They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink.” (xvi. 6.) Thus, as the leper was a figure of the profanation of truth in the Jewish church at the time of the Lord’s appearing among them; and as the “sick of the palsy”

was a figure equally striking of the want of circulation of heavenly wisdom in that church; and as the fever was a figure of the concupiscences of evil which then abounded; and as the possessed of devils were figures of the ascendancy of the powers of darkness which were then prevalent; in like manner, the woman, here spoken of, "who was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years," was also a representative figure, and this a most exact one, of another corruption in that church, which corruption consisted in its propensity to falsify truth, or to pervert it to the confirmation of evil. It is said, "twelve years," to denote that this had always been the case with that church; for years, according to the spiritual sense, signify states of the church, and twelve signify all.

Q. But it is said of this woman, that "she came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment; for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." What do you here understand by "the woman coming behind Jesus, and touching the hem of His garment?"

A. The term "behind," when applied to the Blessed Jesus, denotes the exterior things of His Word, of the church, and of worship, since as His face, or front, is expressive of His mercy, love, and innocence, in like manner, His back, or back-parts, are expressive of what proceeds from His mercy, love, and innocence, that is to say, of His wisdom, truth, and the faith to which that truth gives birth. Accordingly, it is written in the book of Exodus, concerning Moses, when he desired to see the glory of Jehovah, "Thou shalt see my back-parts: but my face shall not be seen," (chap. xxxiii. 23.) to denote that he was not qualified to behold the Almighty as He really is, beaming with Divine Love, but only to behold Him in His Word, and in His works, according to the manifestation of His Divine Wisdom. It is therefore added, that "she touched the hem of His garment," because "the hem of His garment" is expressive of the same idea, viz., of the exterior things of the Word, of

the church, and of worship. For "garment," according to the spiritual idea, when applied to the Great Redeemer, denotes the Divine Truth of His Wisdom, which invests, as it were, the Divine Good of His Love; in agreement with which signification it is written of Him, that "He clothed Himself with light as with a garment," (Psalm civ. 2.) and the "hem" of this garment manifestly means its most external part; whilst to "touch" it, denotes communication with that part. On this occasion, therefore, the woman touched the hem of Jesus's garment, because she was incapable at the time of any nearer communication with Him than by the mere externals of His Word or Truth.

Q. But it is added, further, that "she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." How do you understand these words?

A. By "saying within herself," is to be understood her interior thought, or persuasion; and by "saying, If I may touch his garment, I shall be whole," is to be understood the interior thought or persuasion, that any communication with the Blessed Jesus, howsoever remote, would be sufficient for the cure of all her infirmities; and thus the words are expressive of an extraordinary degree of faith in her God and Saviour, which, as it afterwards appears, was her qualification to receive from Him the blessing of health which she wanted.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, that "Jesus turned Him about; and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole"?

A. By "Jesus turning Him about," is to be understood the manifestation of His Divine Mercy or Love; and by "seeing" the woman, is denoted inspection from that mercy and love; and by saying, "Daughter, be of good comfort," is further to be understood the communication of those blessed principles, from paternal affection; and by adding, "thy faith hath made thee whole," is lastly denoted, that such communication was the result of a belief in His Divine Omnipotence, thus a belief that He

was the Supreme and Only God ; for such is the faith, or belief, which, in the Gospel, is called “saving,” and to which all things are declared possible, and the reason is, because it is a faith, or belief, not of man but of God, agreeably to the proper character of faith, described by Jesus Christ in another place, where He says, “Have the faith of God.” (Mark xi. 22.)

Q. It is said in the conclusion, that “the woman was made whole from that same hour.” What do you suppose to be involved in these words ?

A. They involve the effect produced by the words of the Great Saviour, thus they imply, not only that the woman was cured of her natural infirmity, which was an issue of blood, but also of her spiritual infirmity, or violent propensity to falsify truth, and consequently that she was restored to the blessing of a sound mind, which consists in loving the truth for its own sake, and practising it for the sake of that good with which it is connected, and to which it leads. It is added, “in that same hour,” to show that this effect was the result of her communication with the Blessed Jesus, and was, therefore, the real fruit of His mercy and love, although He ascribes it to the woman’s faith, which in reality is the same thing, since that faith was the product of the same Divine Mercy and Love.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. From the “issue of blood,” which is the subject of this miracle, I am taught to reflect on that more terrible issue of blood which it figures, viz., the falsification of truth, which at that time prevailed in the Jewish church, and which consists in perverting the truth from its proper purpose of purity and holiness of life, and making it favour evil purposes, which are contrary to purity and holiness. I learn, further, that a remedy is still provided by the Divine Mercy for such falsification, and that this remedy consists in applying to the Incarnate God, and to the truths of His most Holy Word, in the spirit of true repentance and obe-

dience. I am resolved, therefore, whensoever I feel any propensity in myself to do violence to the Eternal Truth, by wresting it to an evil purpose, to imitate the conduct of the woman as recorded in the history of this miracle, by applying immediately to my God and Saviour, and touching, if it be but the hem of His garment, through the power of that faith, which acknowledges the Divinity of His Humanity, and thus that He is the Supreme and Only God even as to that Humanity. Then may I humbly hope that my issue of blood will be staunched, and that although at first I come behind the Blessed Jesus, and behold only His back-parts, yet, presently, He will turn Himself about, and make manifest His blessed face of mercy and of loving-kindness, whilst I hear from His gracious lips the consolatory words—"Be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." AMEN.

THE TWO BLIND MEN RESTORED TO SIGHT.

MATT. ix. 27—31.

“And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country.”

Q. You have already told me that the leprosy, the palsy, the fever, the possessed of devils, and the bloody issue, are to be understood, not only literally, but figuratively, as expressing the spiritual disorders prevalent at that time in the Jewish church, and that there is reason to suppose that all the infirmities and distempers, for which the Blessed Jesus provided a remedy, are to be considered in this same figurative character. Can you tell me, then, according to this idea, what is to be understood by the two blind men above mentioned?

A. By blindness, according to its figurative meaning, is to be understood the want of spiritual intelligence respecting the things of heaven and of the church, for what the eye is to the body, that the understanding is to the mind, and consequently, what the loss of eye-sight is to the corporeal part of man, that the loss of intellectual sight is to his spiritual part. By these two blind men, therefore, was figured the want of spiritual understanding

in the Jewish church at that period; and since the want of spiritual understanding is two-fold, viz., the want of the understanding of truth, and the want of the understanding of good, therefore two blind men are here recorded. For the same reason, and in agreement with the same figure, man is gifted with two eyes—one having reference to the understanding of good, and the other to the understanding of truth; on which ground it is that Jesus Christ says—"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; (Matt. v. 29.) for by the right eye is signified the understanding of good, and therefore this eye, and not the left, was to be plucked out, and cast away, in case it offended; in other words, in case it favoured the love of evil, since the left eye, as denoting the understanding of truth, was not capable of offending in the same degree.

Q. But it is said of these two blind men, that they followed Jesus, crying, and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us." How do you understand these words?

A. By the two blind men following Jesus is to be understood, according to the figurative or spiritual sense of the history, that they were made sensible of their want of spiritual understanding; and not only so, but they were also sensible that the Blessed Jesus was able to open their spiritual eyes, and to give them the spiritual sight which they wanted. They accordingly are described as "crying," and "saying," in the supplication which they make on the occasion, because the term "crying" is expressive of the strong desire of their wills to receive the light of truth, as the term "saying" is expressive of the thought of their understandings on the same subject. It is remarkable, also, that they address the Great Redeemer under His two-fold character, as a Man, and as a God—as a Man, when they call Him the Son of David; and as a God, when they say "have mercy on us." Thus they supplicate Him as a God-Man, or as a God made manifest in a Divine Humanity, and dwelling bodily with all His fulness in that Humanity.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written—"When He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto Him, Yea Lord.

A. According to the spiritual sense of this history, by Jesus coming into the house is to be understood His Divine influx of love and wisdom into His church, which is properly His house and temple—His house, so far as His church is principled in heavenly good of love and charity; and His temple, so far as she is principled in heavenly truth of wisdom and intelligence. And by the two blind men coming to Him in the house, is to be understood their spiritual communication and conjunction with Him by virtue of that influx. Again, by Jesus saying unto them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" was intended to be expressed an exploration of the nature and quality of their faith, and how far they believed in His Omnipotence; and by their replying, "Yea, Lord," is to be understood their full persuasion of His Divine ability, and their consequent conviction that from His Divine power they might hope to receive the blessing of spiritual sight, or of a right understanding both of what is good and of what is true.

Q. But it is lastly written, that Jesus touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you: and their eyes were opened; and Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country." What do you conceive to be the meaning of these words?

A. By Jesus "touching their eyes," is to be spiritually understood His communication by Divine influx with the understanding, or intellectual principle of His church or people, since the touch is figurative of communication; and by His saying, "according to your faith be it unto you," is further to be understood, in agreement with the spiritual idea, that the recovery of spiritual sight, or, what is the same thing, of intellectual sight in the

church, would depend entirely on a right belief in the Divine Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, or what amounts to the same, in the Omnipotence of the Divine Humanity of that God; consequently, that there can be no true understanding, or no understanding of truth in the church, only so far as Jesus Christ is acknowledged to be the only God, and approached and worshipped in His Divine Humanity. By "their eyes being opened," is further to be understood the effect of the above faith in the imparting of spiritual understanding, or the understanding of truth; and by Jesus "strictly charging them, saying, See that no man know," is meant Divine caution, lest the Omnipotence of the Divine Humanity, thus exercised in the recovery of spiritual sight, should be regarded in a mere speculative way, as a truth manifested merely in the understanding, instead of making its proper impression on the will, and thus exciting devout affection of love and gratitude to the Giver of all good, and particularly to the Bestower of all spiritual sight of intellectual truth. Lastly, by the men, "when they were departed, spreading abroad His fame in all the country," is denoted that the Divine honour due to the Incarnate God, in His Divine Humanity, is made known in the church in proportion as the understanding of truth is restored, and the human intellect becomes thus receptive of the light of heavenly wisdom; for by "country" is here spiritually to be understood the church; and by "His fame," is meant the Divine honour and worship due to the Divine Humanity of the Blessed Jesus; and by His fame being "spread abroad," is manifestly denoted its being made known, acknowledged, and celebrated.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn, again, to adore the Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, as exercised in removing the infirmities of mankind, and particularly in restoring the great blessing of bodily sight to those who had lost it. I learn, also, that this miracle, like all the others performed by

the Great Redeemer, is a figure, and that in its figurative sense or meaning it involves in it the restoration of spiritual sight to the church, or the recovery of that spiritual understanding of heavenly truth which had been lost. Lastly, I learn that spiritual sight, or spiritual understanding, can only be recovered by faith in Jesus Christ, as the manifested God; thus, by faith in His Divine Humanity, as being one with the Eternal Father, and, therefore, containing in it all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. I am resolved, therefore, henceforth to draw nigh unto this Omnipotent God, as the only restorer of spiritual sight; thus as the only Deliverer from the natural blindness into which I was born and in which I have been educated, that so my understanding may be opened to see by the bright light of the Eternal Truth, and my will may accordingly be affected, and elevated to the pursuit of the Supreme Good. And since I cannot hope to attain these signal blessings, only so far as I prepare myself for their reception, I am further resolved, under a deep sense of my natural ignorance and blindness, to imitate the example of the two blind men recorded in the history of this miracle, by following my Redeemer, crying and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Thus may I hope to experience the virtue of His Divine touch, and to hear His blessed words, "According to thy faith be it unto thee;" and thus, too, will my spiritual eyes be opened, and like the blind men of old, I shall be admitted to the inestimable privilege of spreading abroad the fame of my God and Saviour, by acknowledging Him in His Divine Humanity to be the only Deliverer from spiritual blindness, because the only Giver of true light, as well as of the faculty to receive it. AMEN.

THE DEVIL CAST OUT FROM THE DUMB MAN.

MATT. ix. 32—35.

“As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake : and the multitudes marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Q. You have already told me, in the explanation of a former miracle, that by being “possessed of a devil” is to be understood possession as to the body or corporeal part, as well as with respect to the mind, or mental part ; and that it consisted in the subjection of the corporeal parts or members to the rule and governance of infernal spirits. Can you now tell me what is to be understood by the dumb man here spoken of ?

A. The dumbness, here spoken of, may be considered in two senses, a natural sense, and a spiritual sense ; and according to the natural sense of the term, it means a deprivation of the use of the tongue, or of the organs of speech, so that the dumb person is incapable of articulation ; but according to the spiritual sense of the term, it implies a deprivation of that principle in which all speech originates, viz., the principle of thought, so that a spiritually dumb person is incapable of exercising the faculty of thinking, and especially of thinking on spiritual subjects, and thus of confessing that the Lord is God. The miracle, therefore, under consideration,

has respect to both these kinds of dumbness, and to their cure through the Omnipotence of the Great Redeemer. It is also to be further considered, that the dumbness, here spoken of, like the blindness treated of in a former miracle, was figurative, and that in its figurative character it was representative of the state of the Jewish church at that period, which state was such that they were incapable of exercising spiritual thought, thus of elevating their understandings to the contemplation of spiritual and eternal objects, and of confessing their God accordingly.

Q. But it is written, that “when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.” What do you here understand by the devil being cast out, and by the dumb speaking?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by the devil being cast out, is to be understood, that the man was liberated from the possession which infernal spirits had gained over his bodily organs; and by the dumb speaking, according to the same sense, is to be understood, that the man recovered the use of speech in consequence of such liberation. But according to the spiritual sense of the miracle here recorded, by the devil being cast out, is to be understood, the man’s emancipation from the dominion of the powers of darkness, as to his mind or spirit; and by the dumb speaking, is further to be understood, according to the same sense, the consequent liberation of the faculty of thought, and especially of spiritual thought; so that whereas the man, when under infernal influence, was incapable of elevating his understanding to the contemplation of spiritual and eternal objects, he now acquired a capacity of thinking, and thus of meditating on the Word of God, and of making confession accordingly.

Q. And what do you conceive to be implied in the words which immediately follow, where it is written, that “the multitude marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel”?

A. By the multitude marvelling, is to be understood the holy awe with which their minds were struck at witnessing the effect of the Divine Omnipotence of the

Saviour God, manifested in the subjugation and separation of the powers of darkness, and in the consequent liberation of the church, both as to the bodily and mental faculties, so that not only the bodily tongue was loosed, but the mental thought, from which the tongue derives the exercise of its powers, was set at liberty to employ itself on spiritual subjects, and thus to elevate itself to spiritual and eternal objects; and by saying, "it was never so seen in Israel," is implied that the church never before witnessed such Divine effects; and that, consequently, the Saviour, in whom these effects originated, must be the God of heaven and earth, thus the Eternal Jehovah.

Q. But it is added, that "the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." What do you learn from these words?

A. I learn, from these words, that wheresoever evil and error have taken possession of the human heart, inconsistency and mistaken judgment are sure to be found there. For what idea could be more inconsistent, and what judgment more groundless, than to suppose that any being can act against himself and his own interest? Yet, when the Pharisees conceived that the power to cast out devils was derived from the prince of the devils, what is this but conceiving that the prince of the devils acts in opposition to himself, and to the interests of his own kingdom? Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus exclaim, on this occasion, as it is written in another place, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" (Mark iii. 23.) Yet the blindness of the Pharisees of old, in not acknowledging the Divine Power of Jesus Christ, exercised in the casting out of devils, is not greater than what prevails, at this day, in the minds of many Christians; whilst they are not aware that every opposition to the kingdom of darkness in themselves, every combat against their natural evils, every restraint made to their bad passions, and every victory obtained over them, are manifest proofs and demonstrations of the same Divine Presence and Agency, since it is as impossible for man to combat and overthrow

the enemies of his salvation, by any power merely his own, as it is for the prince of the devils to cast out devils, as for satan to cast out satan.

Q. It is further added, that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease amongst the people." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn, again, to adore the goodness of that Divine Being whose life was thus spent in providing for the necessities, and supplying the wants, both spiritual and natural, of His distressed creatures. I learn, further, to adore the gift of that Divine Word, or Speech, which was powerful at once to remove the distempers, both of mind and body, and thus to restore man to all the health and strength of heavenly life, and order, in every principle of his constitution. I am taught, also, to mark some singular and edifying distinctions, which here occur in the letter of the Divine history, such as the distinction between "teaching" and "preaching;" and also, the distinction between "sickness" and "disease."

Q. And what do you suppose to be the ground and meaning of these distinctions?

A. The distinction, in both cases, originates in the distinction between the two universal principles of good and truth, and also of their opposites, evil and error; and the distinction is marked in the sacred history, in order to lead the reader to a right apprehension of those eternal principles, their distinct natures, and yet their union in that distinction. The term "teaching," therefore, is applied to denote the Divine truth of doctrine, which ever influenced the speech of the Incarnate God; whilst the term "preaching" is applied to denote the power of Divine Love from which He spake, and to which His Divine Speech was intended to conduct His hearers. Thus both terms united were designed to express that Divine and heavenly marriage of love and wisdom, or of goodness and truth, which constitutes the very life and soul of the Eternal Word; and of which Jesus Christ

speaks in another place, where He says, "My words are spirit and are life;" (John vi. 63.) "spirit" having relation to their wisdom or truth, and "life" having relation to the love and good from which that wisdom and truth flowed. In like manner, the two terms, "sickness" and "disease," were intended to express the opposite or infernal marriage, viz., the marriage of evil and error; sickness having relation to the one and disease to the other, whilst both united express the conjunction of those principles in the human mind, and thus express the true nature of man's destruction, which has no other source than that infernal union.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle?

A. I learn that there is a spiritual dumbness as well as a natural one, and that the Lord God the Saviour Jesus Christ is the only Being in the universe who has the power to remove either. I learn, therefore, not only that the organs of bodily speech are under His Divine control, but also the organs of spiritual speech, which are nothing more or less than the principles and persuasions of spiritual thought. I learn, further, that both the above kinds of dumbness are in connexion with disorderly spirits, and that they cannot be cured, only so far as those spirits are first cast out. I am yet further instructed, that the manifestation of Divine power, as exhibited in the cure of both kinds of dumbness, has a double effect on different minds, exciting in the well-disposed a sacred awe and adoration, and leading them to exclaim, "It was never so seen in Israel;" whilst with the ill-disposed it produces a contrary effect of calumny and misinterpretation, leading them to exclaim, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." Lastly, I learn, that in all the words of the Blessed Jesus there is a two-fold principle, which He Himself distinguishes by the names of spirit and life, and which is marked in the above history by the terms teaching and preaching—the former having relation to the Divine Wisdom or Truth, and the latter to the Divine Love or

Goodness. In agreement with this distinction is that of the opposite principles, or of evil and error, one of which is, therefore, called "sickness," whilst the other is called "disease." I am resolved, therefore, henceforth, to regard all my powers of speech, whether natural or spiritual, as gifts from the Almighty Dispenser of all good, and to employ them accordingly to His glory, the benefit of my fellow-creatures, and the consequent promotion of my own salvation. Thus shall I ever, in the use of those powers, be struck with a sacred awe and adoration, which will lead me also to exclaim with the multitude of old, "It was never so seen in Israel;" and thus, too, shall I escape the terrible misinterpretation and perversion of miraculous agency by which the Pharisees of old were deceived; and instead of joining in their infernal cry, "He casteth out devils through the prince of devils," I shall joyfully and gratefully ascribe the agency to the inexpressible mercy and Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, whose high and holy name is Jesus Christ. Lastly, I am resolved to regard all the words of Jesus Christ in their two-fold character of spirit and of life—in other words, of wisdom and love, or of goodness and truth; and to take good heed to myself, lest I ever separate those principles in my own mind by receiving truth in my understanding without good in my will, or good in my will without truth in my understanding. To the same purpose I am resolved to distinguish well in myself the opposite principles of evil and error, calling one sickness and the other disease, and to apply to the Great Redeemer for the cure of both, under the full conviction that they never can be cured but by the joint reception of His love, or goodness, in my will, and of His wisdom, or truth, in my understanding, and of both in my life and conversation. AMEN.

THE WITHERED HAND RESTORED.

MATT. xii. 9—13.

“And when He was departed thence, He went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse Him. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.”

Q. WHAT do you conceive to be meant, here, by a withered hand?

A. According to the literal or natural idea, by a “withered hand” is to be understood the member of the body so called, deprived of its life and consequent use, for want of a free circulation of vital powers; but, according to the spiritual idea, by a withered hand is to be understood a faculty, or power of the human mind, deprived also of its life and energy, for want of a free circulation of vital principles. For the hand of the body, as being created to execute the purposes of the soul, is a figure of power, or strength; and, since all spiritual power and strength is of two kinds, viz., intellectual and voluntary; the one originating in the understanding and the other in the will, or the one originating in truth and the other in good; therefore, every man has two hands, in like manner as he has two eyes and two ears, the one being intended to express the power of truth in the intellect, whilst the other is

intended to express the power derived from good in the will. By the withered hand, therefore, recorded in the above history, is spiritually figured the state of the Jewish church at that period, in that it was deprived of one of the above spiritual powers, so that its members were principled either in truth without good, or in good without truth ; thus either in understanding without will, or in will without understanding ; and this by reason of the want of circulation of the Divine principles of heavenly love and wisdom in their minds and lives. Accordingly, in the original tongue, the term rendered “withered” is expressive of the idea of dryness, and, therefore, the withered hand might properly have been rendered a dry hand, to denote that the power of truth, or of good, was dried up, through a defect of the circulation of heavenly life in the interiors of the mind. It is remarkable, also, that Jesus Christ, in speaking of the hand which offended, and was to be cut off and cast away, (Matt. v. 30.) confines his observation to the right hand, because the right hand, like the right eye, has respect to the will of man, as the left has respect to the understanding ; and, therefore, Jesus Christ, by His injunction to cut off and cast away the offending right hand, meant to inculcate this edifying lesson, that man ought to pay more attention to the evil desires in his will than to the erroneous persuasions in his understanding, because all real offence comes from the former, and not at all from the latter, only so far as they are connected with, and derived from, the former.

Q. But it is written in the history, that the people present proposed this question to the Blessed Jesus : “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day ? that they might accuse Him.” To which He replied, “What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out ? How much then is a man better than a sheep ?” What instruction do you learn from the above question, and the answer which was given to it ?

A. The above question is grounded in a mistaken idea of that rest which is figured by the Sabbath, and is involved in it as if it implied an absolute cessation from all work or operation of the body; whereas it only implies a cessation from the work or labour of the mind, all which work or labour originates in man's evils, and their connection with the powers of darkness, according as it is written—"There is no peace [or rest], saith the Lord, unto the wicked." (Isa. xlviii. 22.) Jesus Christ, accordingly, in His reply to the above question, confirms the above idea of the Sabbath, as involving in it, not the mere rest of the body only, but the rest of the soul—in other words, a cessation from sin, which is the only true cause of what can properly be called labour, since the work of the body is not properly labour, only so far as it is done unwillingly, and thus not in the spirit of that freedom which heavenly love and heavenly wisdom never fail to inspire; for such is the force of His Divine argument, if regarded only according to the letter, thus as implying that it is lawful on the Sabbath-day to save the life of a sheep which has fallen into a pit. But how much greater is the force of this argument when spiritually understood, or when interpreted according to its spiritual and internal meaning! For, according to that meaning, by a "sheep" is here to be understood the affection of good in man; and by this "sheep falling into a pit" is to be further understood the affection of good immersed in false principles and persuasions; for by "a pit," and especially an "infernal pit," whensoever the expression occurs in the Sacred Scriptures, such persuasions and principles are always signified. The argument of the Blessed Jesus, therefore, when considered in its full force, is this, that, as He afterwards expresses it, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day"—in other words, it is lawful to save the life of a sheep, whether considered in a natural or in a spiritual sense; thus it is lawful to do anything by which the benefit either of animal or of mental life may be promoted, this being the very ground and intention of

the Sabbath to promote the best interests of man, and therefore especially to “lift the sheep out of the pit”—in other words, to elevate the affection of good out of false persuasions, to seek conjunction with the Eternal Truth, and thus with the God of that truth, which is the true Sabbath.

Q. And what further instruction do you learn from the question which Jesus Christ proposes on this occasion, when He asks, “How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?”

A. I am led by the question to examine the distinct natures and qualities of a man and of a sheep; and from such examination I am conducted to the important discovery that a man and a sheep are distinguished from each other principally by this mark and character, that man, as being figurative of heavenly wisdom or intelligence, has the faculty from God of elevating his thought to an eternal end; and not only so, but also of acknowledging in humility and in thankfulness that his life, with all its powers and enjoyments, are from a Divine source, and capable of being conjoined with that source; whereas a sheep, as being figurative only of a natural affection, possesses no such quality, being utterly incapable of elevating his thought to an eternal object, or of conjoining himself by affection with any other than temporal objects.

Q. But it is lastly added—“Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole, like as the other.” What do you here understand by the injunction of Jesus Christ, “Stretch forth thine hand”? and by the man’s compliance, as expressed in these words, “And he stretched it forth”?

A. According to the literal sense of the history, both the Lord’s injunction and the man’s compliance have relation only to the stretching forth the hand of the body which had before been withered; but according to the spiritual sense of the miracle, here recorded, by the Lord’s injunction to “stretch out his hand,” is to be

understood the Divine will and pleasure, that man should exercise freely, and as of himself, the powers both of love and of wisdom, or of goodness and of truth, imparted to him continually by his Merciful Creator ; yet that he should do so under the constant grateful acknowledgment that those powers are not his own, but perpetual gifts from a Divine bounty ; and by the man's compliance with this injunction is further to be understood, his free exertion of the spiritual powers with which he was invested, whilst he humbly acknowledged that those powers were from God, and yet exercised them as if they were his own, absolutely independent of their Divine source.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the force and meaning of the concluding words, “ And it was restored whole, like as the other ? ”

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words again have reference only to the hands of the body, teaching that one was made sound and whole as the other ; but according to the spiritual sense, they have a deeper meaning and signification, as having relation to the mental powers above spoken of, viz., to the power of the human will, and to the power of the human understanding ; in other words, to the power of goodness, and to the power of truth, or, as it may be otherwise expressed, to the power of love, and to the power of wisdom. Agreeably, therefore, to this application of the words, they were intended to teach the important and edifying lesson, that when either of the above powers has been in a state of disorder and infirmity, and is afterwards restored by Divine aid to order and strength, its restoration is such, in measure and degree, as to render it exactly suited to the other, so that each power shall be equally balanced and proportioned to the other. Thus, as in the formation of the human body, a wonderful Providence, we find, is continually in exercise, to preserve a due proportion of the limbs, so that the right arm, and the right leg, for instance, may be exactly fitted to the left, both in size and shape : in like manner the same Providence is continually operative to preserve the same fitness and meet-

ness in the powers of the mind, and this in such a sort, that the power of the will shall always keep pace with the power of the understanding; or, what is the same thing, the power of goodness with the power of truth, and *vice versa*. Accordingly, it is ordained of the Divine wisdom and mercy, that no man shall possess more of goodness than he possesses of truth, or more of love than he possesses of wisdom, or more of will than he possesses of understanding, and *vice versa*; and this, with the Divine view, that the spiritual form of man, like the bodily, may be in exact harmony and proportion, which would not be the case unless the relative powers were fitted to each other in the manner above described.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. Under the figure of "a withered hand," I learn to discern not only a bodily imperfection and weakness, but also a mental one, consisting in a defect of the operation either of love or of wisdom, or, what amounts to the same, either of goodness or of truth, in the church in general, and in its members in particular. But whilst I am taught thus to see and to lament human defect and imperfection, I am taught, at the same time to discover and rejoice in a Divine Mercy and Omnipotence, brought near in the Incarnate God, for the removal of disorder, and the restoration of order in the diseased constitution of man. I am resolved, therefore, under all my spiritual infirmities to apply to that God for relief, and especially when I find that my "hand is withered," whether it arise from the defect of heavenly love and goodness in my will, or of heavenly wisdom and truth in my understanding. I am resolved, also, to cherish in my mind and life the just and proper idea of the Sabbath day, which is inculcated in the history of this miracle, by believing it to be a day sanctified to a "well-doing," or to the performance of all those good works which lead to the enjoyment of an "eternal Sabbath," consisting in deliverance from the powers of evil, and in consequent restoration to a blessed conjunction of life with the Father of Mercies, whose

high and holy name is Jesus Christ. Thus, may I humbly hope, under every defect and infirmity, whether of will or of understanding, to hear from my Saviour God the blessed injunction, "Stretch forth Thy hand:" and thus, too, shall I further rejoice in complying willingly with that injunction, until each faculty of my mind be restored to harmony and due proportion with the other, so that in me may be fulfilled the concluding words of the above memorable history, "It was restored whole, like as the other." AMEN.

THE DEVIL CAST OUT FROM THE BLIND AND DUMB.

MATT. xii. 22—28.

“ Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb : and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David ? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand : And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself ; how shall then his kingdom stand ? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out ? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

Q. You have already told me what is to be understood by being “ possessed of a devil.” Can you now tell me what is here further to be understood by “ one blind and dumb ” ?

A. According to the letter of the history, by “ one blind and dumb ” is to be understood a person deprived of bodily sight and of bodily speech ; but according to the spiritual sense, is to be understood the state of the Jewish church at that period, which, in consequence of being immersed in the evil of self-love, and the love of the world, was “ blind ” to the knowledge of heavenly truth, and overspread with the darkness of false principles and persuasions, by reason of which it was also “ dumb,” or unable to think, to utter, and to teach any truth of doctrine conducive to good of life. For there are two distinct origins of spiritual dumbness, one in the

will, and the other in the understanding, and the latter is here recorded, because connected with blindness; whereas, when the former is noticed, it is connected with deafness; (Mark ix. 25.) blindness having relation to a defect of truth in the understanding, arising from the influence of false principles and persuasions; and deafness having relation to a defect of good in the will, by reason of the influence of evil love and corrupt affections.

Q. Do you conceive, then, that there is any necessary connection between blindness and dumbness?

A. Not according to the literal meaning of those two bodily imperfections, but according to the spiritual meaning, the connection, I conceive, is both requisite and close. For blindness, according to the spiritual idea, implies a defect of the spiritual light of truth in the human understanding, through the influence of false principles and persuasions; and where this is the case, spiritual dumbness must be a necessary consequence, because without spiritual thought derived from the light of truth in the understanding, it is impossible for man to give utterance to truth; and if he cannot give utterance to truth, he is then spiritually "dumb," agreeably to what has been above observed concerning this spiritual infirmity.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, "He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw"?

A. By "He" is to be understood the Great Saviour, whose name is Jesus Christ; and by "healing him" is further to be understood, the restoration of the blessing of sight and of speech, whether considered in a natural or in a spiritual sense. By the "blind" and "dumb," therefore, both "speaking" and "seeing," is further to be understood, the effect of the healing virtue applied by the Great Redeemer, and made manifest, both naturally and spiritually; naturally, by opening the eyes of one who had been blind, and by loosening his tongue; and spiritually, by opening the eyes of the understanding also, to see by the bright light of the Eternal Truth,

and, at the same time, by loosening the organs of spiritual speech, to give utterance to that truth, and thus to declare the praises of the Incarnate God.

Q. But it is written further, "that all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." How do you understand what is here said of the "people," and the opposite sentiment ascribed to the "Pharisees"?

A. By the people being "amazed," is to be understood the sacred awe with which their minds were impressed on observing the operation of the Divine Power exercised upon the blind and dumb man possessed with a devil; and by their exclamation, "Is not this the Son of David?" is further to be understood the unanimous conviction wrought in their minds by a supernatural agency, that Jesus Christ was the expected Messiah, and, consequently, was a being more than human. Again, by the Pharisees saying, "This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, is to be understood the lamentable perversion of the Divine Truth in the minds of all hypocrites, or of those who practise external piety, while their hearts are totally void of the heavenly spirit of love and charity. For the miracle above recorded was a manifest proof of Divine agency, being wrought, as Jesus Christ afterwards declares, (verse 28.) by the Spirit of God. But the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Divine Truth, and, therefore, the Pharisees, in ascribing the miracle to "Beelzebub," proved themselves guilty of that most terrible and unpardonable of all sins, the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is nothing else but the perversion and consequent profanation of Divine truth. Moreover, by Beelzebub is meant "the god of flies;" and by "flies," according to their spiritual signification, are to be understood the false principles and persuasions of the natural mind; therefore the Pharisees, in ascribing the miracle to Beelzebub, and not to the Spirit of God, not only perverted

and profaned the truth, but gave a manifest proof of their own folly, by supposing that the “prince of the devils” could oppose himself and his own kingdom, or that “Satan could cast out Satan.” Yet such, alas! is still the folly of those who deny the Divine Omnipotence of the Blessed Jesus, and thus rob Him of His Divinity; when yet they ought rather to conclude, in agreement with the tenor of what Jesus afterwards declares, that in His Divine Person “the kingdom of God is come unto man;” for thus He expresses Himself—“If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn, in the first place, again to adore the Divine Mercy and Omnipotence of that Incarnate God who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, whether wrought on the bodies or in the minds of men, and whether they appear in a simple or in a compound shape. In the next place, I learn to distinguish in myself the two mental defects of want of eyes and want of speech, or of spiritual blindness and of spiritual dumbness, and to see that the latter is always a necessary consequence of the former. Lastly, from the different effects produced on different minds by the above miracle, whilst it led some, under the impulse of a sacred awe, to confess the Blessed Jesus to be the true Messiah, and led others to pervert and blaspheme the Eternal Truth, I am taught the great importance of attending well to the temper and disposition of my own mind, that I may always be in a state willingly and thankfully to confess the operation of the Divine Omnipotence, and thus to escape the dreadful crime of perverting and profaning Divine purposes and intentions. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, under every state of spiritual blindness and dumbness, to apply to my Saviour Jesus Christ for His Omnipotent aid. I am resolved, further, to watch well over all the affections and thoughts of my own heart, so that I may always entertain just and worthy sentiments respecting

Divine Agency, and never, like the Pharisees of old, impute the operation of the Spirit of God to any inferior power, and especially to that infernal one, the power of "Beelzebub." So may I humbly hope to experience the healing virtue of my God and Saviour, in the cure of all my spiritual blindness and dumbness, and being enabled both to "see" and to "speak," may rejoice in the discovery of the glory of His Divinity, and in telling forth His praises from generation to generation. AMEN.

THE FIVE LOAVES AND THE TWO FISHES.

MATT. XIV. 14—21.

“ And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion towards them, and He healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart ; give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to Me. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

Q. What do you here understand by “ Jesus going forth, and seeing a great multitude ” ?

A. According to the letter of the history, by “ Jesus going forth, and seeing a great multitude,” is to be understood His going forth as to His personal or bodily presence, and His taking a view of the people who followed Him ; but according to the internal or spiritual sense of the history, by “ Jesus going forth,” is to be understood the Divine influx of His Divine love into His church, thus into the truths and knowledges in which His church was principled ; and by “ seeing a great multitude,” is to be further understood the influx of His Divine wisdom into those truths and knowledges, to note their several characters and qualities. It therefore follows,

“that He was moved with compassion towards them, and healed their sick ;” because to be “moved with compassion” is an effect of His Divine love towards His church or people ; and to “heal their sick” is an effect of His Divine wisdom, in removing the false principles and persuasions, which at that time prevailed amongst them.

Q. And what do you further understand by the words which follow, where it is written, “that when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, the meaning of the above words is so plain, as to require no explanation ; but according to the spiritual sense, it may be needful to explain them. By the “evening,” then, here spoken of, is to be understood the last state of the Jewish church, or a state when there was no longer any faith or love prevailing amongst that people ; and by “the disciples coming to Jesus, saying, This is a desert place, the time is now past,” is to be further understood an acknowledgment of that state of the church by those who were principled in the truths of the new or Christian church ; for by “the disciples” are signified those who received the doctrines of this latter church ; and by their saying, “This is a desert place, the time is now past,” is further denoted a perception that there was no longer any desire of heavenly good, or any understanding of heavenly truth remaining ; the one being signified by a “desert place,” and the other by “the time is now past.” By their adding further, “Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals,” is further to be understood ignorance on the part of the disciples, who were not as yet fully instructed as to the Divine origin of spiritual food, and who, therefore, supposed that the multitude might procure it for themselves, in a state of separation from the Blessed Jesus ; for by “sending the multitude away,” is manifestly denoted such a state of separation ; and by their “going to the villages to buy

themselves victuals," is further to be understood the procuring to themselves spiritual food in that state.

Q. But it is added, that "Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat." What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of these words?

A. According to the literal sense of the history, these words contain an intimation on the part of the Blessed Jesus, that His disciples should provide bodily food for the multitude; but according to the spiritual sense, they have relation to spiritual food, which is instruction from the Holy Word in truth and wisdom, and thus contain an intimation, that that food should be provided by those who were already instructed in truth and wisdom. For by Jesus saying, according to the spiritual sense, is to be understood a Divine dictate; and by saying to them, or to His disciples, is further to be understood a dictate to those of His church who were already instructed in the Goods and Truths of His most Holy Word; and by His adding, "they need not depart," is further to be understood the necessity of abiding in the Divine presence, in order to receive instruction; and by adding further, "give ye them to eat," is implied that spiritual food, or spiritual instruction, was to be communicated by the intelligent and wise to those who were in want of intelligence and wisdom.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is written, "They say unto Him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes"?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words imply the impossibility of supplying the bodily wants of the multitude out of so small a store of bodily food; but according to the spiritual sense, in which they relate to the spiritual food of instruction, by "saying unto Him" (Jesus), is to be understood perception of the little good and little truth which then prevailed in the natural man; for by "the disciples saying to Jesus," is to be understood perception; and by saying, "We have here but five loaves and two fishes," is denoted the very small portion of good and of truth which then prevailed in the

natural man or mind ; loaves having respect to the principle of good, and fishes to the principle of truth.

Q. But it is added, that “He said, Bring them hither to me.” How do you understand these words ?

A. According to the letter of the history, these words mean, that the literal loaves and fishes should be brought to Jesus ; but according to the spirit of the history, they imply, that what is signified by the loaves and fishes, viz., the goods and truths of the natural man, should be brought to Him ; in other words, should be submitted to His Divine guidance, government, and blessing. “Bring them to me” is, therefore, a Divine injunction, ever proceeding from the Blessed Jesus, and ever enforcing its weighty obligations on all His children ; because it is of the first importance in the great business of regeneration and consequent salvation, that all His children should refer to Him, as the Divine Giver, every good and every truth of the natural mind or man, that so it may not only receive perpetual increase from His Divine benediction, but may also finally be brought to the blessedness of an eternal conjunction with Him.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, that “He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude” ?

A. By the “multitude,” according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood the church, desirous to be spiritually fed, or to receive instruction ; and by Jesus “commanding the multitude to sit down on the grass,” is to be further understood arrangement according to Divine order of the lower principles of the church ; for by Jesus “commanding,” is signified Divine order ; and by “sitting down on the grass,” is signified arrangement according to that order in the lower principles of the church, as previously necessary to receive instruction, “grass” denoting those lower principles. It is accordingly written in another place, where this miracle is recorded, that “there was much

grass in the place," (John vi. 10.) which is a circumstance too trivial to be mentioned in the Word of the Most High God, unless it had involved a spiritual sense and meaning; and what this spiritual sense and meaning is, is manifest in another passage, where the Blessed Jesus saith, speaking of the growth of spiritual seed in the church, "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, [or grass,] then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," (Mark iv. 28.) where the "blade," or "grass," evidently denotes the first reception of truth in the memory, or what may be called scientific truth, which is here "the grass" on which the multitude were commanded to "sit down," since without truth first received in the memory, and rightly arranged there, no spiritual instruction can be received; spiritual instruction, in all cases, having relation to the elevation of scientific truth to its Divine Source, and to its conjunction with that source.

Q. And what do you understand by Jesus taking "the five loaves and the two fishes"?

A. By the "five loaves and two fishes," it has been already seen, are to be understood the goods and truths of the natural man or mind, about to be initiated into Divine Truth, and thus to be nourished; and by Jesus, therefore, "taking" these loaves and fishes, is to be understood "first" initiation, when these goods and truths are acknowledged by the understanding to be His and from Him; it is accordingly written in the institution of the sacrament of the holy supper, that Jesus first "took" bread, and then "blessed, and brake" it; and that when He gave it to His disciples, He said, "Take, eat; this is my body," (Matt. xxvi. 26.) denoting that before He can bless the bread, and before His disciples can "eat" it, it must be first acknowledged in the understanding to be His, and from Him.

Q. And what do you conceive to be meant by Jesus "looking up to heaven"?

A. To "look up to heaven," according to the sense of the letter, is to direct the eyes of the body upwards,

towards heaven; but according to the spiritual sense or meaning of the expression, it has reference to the eyes of the mind turned inward into itself, for heaven, we know, is within man, as it is written, "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 21.) When this expression, however, is applied to the Blessed Jesus, it denotes His looking to the Divine principle within Himself, since, as the "kingdom of God" is in every man, so the Divine Being or Principle was in the Blessed Jesus as His inmost life or soul. Moreover, heaven is heaven by virtue of its reception of the Divine Love and Wisdom in close conjunction, and, therefore, whether we speak of heaven, or of the conjunction of the Divine Love and Wisdom, it is the same thing. Thus, by "looking up to heaven," when applied to the Blessed Jesus, is represented an internal act of His mind, or of His Humanity, elevating itself to a fuller view of, and closer union with, the Divinity which dwelt in it.

Q. And what do you understand by His "blessing" and "breaking" the loaves?

A. By "blessing the loaves" is spiritually to be understood the initiation of natural goods into the Divine good, and their conjunction with that good, for everything is called blessed, and is blessed, in proportion as it is so conjoined; and by "breaking" the loaves, is again to be understood the conjunction of the natural goods with Divine spiritual truth, by virtue whereof natural goods are viewed and distinguished into the particular goods of which they are compounded, and are thus rendered capable of a fuller incorporation into the life and love. For such is the nature of all good, that whilst it is seen in the general only, and not in its particulars, it cannot be so fully admitted into the mind, in like manner as a loaf of bread cannot be admitted into the bodily life for nourishment and support, unless it be first broken into pieces, and afterwards masticated in the mouth of the eater. Hence arises the necessity, in spiritual eating, to conjoin good with truth, or love in the will with wisdom in the understanding, since it is by truth and wisdom

alone that any good, or any love, can be properly discriminated and particularized, so as to render it admissible into the spiritual life of man. This, therefore, was the hidden reason why mention is here made of breaking the loaves, and also why the same act is recorded in other passages of the Word, as at the institution of the Holy Supper, (Matt. xxvi. 26 ; Mark xiv. 22 ; Luke xxii. 19.) and particularly at the village of Emmaus, where it is written that Jesus was “known of the disciples by breaking of bread.” (Luke xxiv. 35.) For the same reason, the perfume for the use of the Jewish tabernacle was required to be beaten small or bruised, (Exod. xxx. 36.) bruising having the same signification in regard to perfume that breaking has in regard to bread. For a similar reason, too, the powers and principles of evil are said to be “beaten small as the dust before the wind,” (Ps. xviii. 42.) because as good cannot be admitted into the life of man until it be minutely viewed as to its nature and quality, in like manner evil cannot be expelled from the life of man, until its nature and quality are also distinctly seen, and this by the light of the Eternal Truth. In the great work, therefore, of man’s purification from evil, it is not sufficient for him to confess, in general terms, that he is a sinner, or full of evil, but he ought to enter upon a particular exploration of the distinct marks and characters of evil in himself—in other words, he ought to break and bruise it, otherwise it will remain for ever incorporated in his life’s love.

Q. And what instruction do you learn from the words which follow, where it is written that “Jesus gave the loaves to His disciples, and His disciples to the multitude”?

A. I am instructed by these words, that the Blessed Jesus doth not teach truth, or give spiritual food, immediately, but mediately, or by and through His most Holy Word. For by the disciples are here meant those who have already admitted into their minds the goods and truths of that Word ; thus, by the disciples are here represented the goods and truths themselves which they

have received; whereas, by the “multitude” are represented those who are desirous of receiving instruction and the spiritual nourishment which it yields. When, therefore, it is said that Jesus “gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude,” it was intended to teach the edifying lesson that the Almighty always employs instruments to effect His saving purposes of instruction and consequent regeneration; and that the instruments which He employs are the goods and truths of His most Holy Word, and those who teach them; thus, that the order still is, for the edification of His church, that He shall “give the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude”—in other words, that there shall always be mediating instruments, or mediating ministers, between Him and His people.

Q. But it follows, that “they did all eat, and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets-full.” What do you understand by these words?

A. By all eating, is to be understood that all incorporated into their minds and lives the good, which was thus conjoined with the Divine good and truth; for by eating is spiritually signified such incorporation, inasmuch as spiritual eating is nothing else but the reception of the good of heavenly love from Jesus Christ; and this good is received, when natural good, or the good into which man is born, submits itself, and acknowledges its Divine parent and nourisher. By being filled, is further signified a full contentment and satisfaction of mind experienced in the reception of the good here spoken of, by virtue of which it is acknowledged to be enough and all-sufficient to gratify every desire and supply every want. For such is the nature of the human mind, created for an eternal conjunction of life and love with its Heavenly Father, that nothing but an Infinite good, which is the Divine love, can fill and satisfy it; and, therefore, all finite goods, such as worldly wealth, honours, reputation, pleasure, and the like, howsoever abundant, and howsoever apparently gratifying they may

seem, still leave the soul in a state of all that emptiness, of which it is written—"He hath sent the rich empty away." (Luke i. 53.) Nevertheless, these latter and less goods have their important uses, and therefore are not to be rejected whensoever they submit themselves to be filled with a higher and an eternal good.

Q. And what do you further understand by "taking up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets-full"?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by these words is to be understood the miraculous increase of natural food in consequence of the Divine presence and blessing; but according to the spiritual idea, the words have relation to spiritual eating, which is instruction in the Word of God, and therefore denote the immense increase of spiritual food, when it also receives the Divine blessing, and is thus conjoined with its Divine source. For, in regard to spiritual nourishment, the case is this, that the more a man eats, the more he is made sensible of the Infinite stores of Divine nourishment provided for him; and thus, contrary to what is true of natural eating, his food grows more abundant the more he receives. This super-abundance is, therefore, here represented by the twelve baskets-full of fragments, which are said to be taken up—in other words, to be elevated to conjunction with the Divine Giver of all food, by the humble and grateful acknowledgment that they are from Him, and are His.

Q. And what instruction do you learn from the concluding words, where is written—"And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children"?

A. By these words are denoted those of the Lord's New Church here on earth, who received the truths and goods of His most Holy Word—"men" denoting those who were more principled in truths; "women," those who were more in the affection of truth; and "children" denoting those who were more principled in innocence. Thus the words taken together have reference to the heavenly marriage of good and of truth, or of love and

of wisdom, which constitutes the church. And thus, too, we are further instructed in the important distinction between what are here called "men," "women," and "children;" and in the still more important representation of each class of beings, as having reference to the distinct spiritual and celestial principles which constitute the Lord's church and kingdom.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn, in the first place, to adore the miraculous power of that Incarnate God, who, when it pleaseth Him, can convert spiritual food into natural, as in the case of the manna in the wilderness, and of the loaves and fishes in the present instance. In the next place, I learn, from the spiritual sense of the above miracle, many interesting and edifying particulars respecting spiritual food, and its reception in the human mind, being taught—1. That all spiritual food is of two kinds, viz., good and truth, or love and wisdom—the one intended for the nourishment of the human will, and the other for the nourishment of the human understanding; the one, therefore, represented by the loaves, and the other by the fishes. 2. That before spiritual food can be fully received, there must be a right arrangement in the lower principles of the human mind, signified by the Lord commanding the multitude to sit down on the grass. 3. That before spiritual food can be fully received and incorporated into the life, the Divine presence and benediction must be supplicated, and at the same time the understanding must be opened to the light of truth, to enable it to explore and distinguish well the principles of spiritual nourishment, signified by Jesus taking the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, and blessing and breaking the loaves. 4. That spiritual food, which is instruction in the Word of God, is not given immediately by Jesus Christ, but mediately, that is to say, by the goods and truths of that Word, through the instrumentality of those who teach them, signified by Jesus giving the loaves to the disciples, and

the disciples to the multitude. 5. That the food derived from the Word of God is the only food which can fully satisfy an immortal spirit, signified by all eating and being filled. 6. That in all spiritual eating there is an immense increase of spiritual food, which increase ought to be devoutly acknowledged to be the result of the Divine bounty, signified by taking up the fragments that remained, twelve baskets-full. 7. That there are three distinct classes of men who constitute the Lord's church and kingdom, and who are, therefore, carefully to be distinguished from each other, viz., those who receive more of truth in their understandings, those who receive more of the affection of truth in their wills, and those who are in innocence, signified by the "five thousand men, beside women and children." I am resolved, therefore, in reading the Word of God, or in receiving spiritual food in any other manner, to attend well to every particular of Divine instruction recorded in the history of this miracle; and, then, may I humbly hope to be fed by my God and Saviour, as the multitudes of old were, and thus to find angels' food in every state of life, even the most desolate and desert. And then, too, may I hope further, like the infant church of old, to be filled—in other words, to find a full satisfaction and contentment derived from my food; and also to experience a blessed increase of spiritual nourishment, leading me to a more devout acknowledgment of the Divine Giver, both of natural and spiritual food, and thus to join in the angelic song—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 12.)

AMEN.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA.

MATT. xiv. 22—33.

“ And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray : and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves : for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit ; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.”

Q. WHAT do you understand here by Jesus “ constraining His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side ” ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by these words is meant what is literally expressed ; but according to the spiritual sense, they imply a requirement of the Divine order, that the members of the church should acquire the knowledges of good and of truth, and should thus change their state in regard to spiritual life ; for by

“the disciples,” are here meant the members of the church; and by Jesus “constraining them,” is meant the requirement of Divine order; and by “getting into a ship,” is spiritually to be understood the acquirement of the knowledges of good and of truth, such knowledges being signified and represented by “a ship,” agreeably to what was shown in the explanation of a former miracle; (Matt. viii. 23—28.) and by “going before Him unto the other side,” is to be understood a change of spiritual state, or a passage from knowledge to the life of knowledge.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which immediately follow, where it is written, “while He sent the multitudes away”?

A. In the original Greek, the term here rendered “sent away,” is derived from the verb *apoluo*, which more properly signifies, to loosen or to set at liberty; and which, therefore, when interpreted according to its spiritual signification, denotes that the Blessed Jesus, after feeding the multitudes with the goods and truths of His Holy Word, left them at liberty to act and to live in agreement, or otherwise, with the heavenly instruction they had received; and that the term was intended to suggest such a spiritual idea, is further confirmed by this circumstance, that the Evangelist Saint Mark, in recording this same miracle, (chap. vi. 45, 46.) applies two distinct expressions in the original Greek, which are yet considered as one and the same in the English translation. For in the original Greek, the term *apoluo* is applied to express the sending away of the people, at verse 45, whereas in the next verse 46, the term *apotasso* is applied, which evidently means, not sending away the people, as it is rendered by the English translation, but arranging them, or putting them in their proper places; thus, according to the spiritual sense, denoting the orderly arrangement of truths, when each takes its proper place in the regenerate mind. This, therefore, appears to be the reason why this circumstance respecting the multitudes is recorded; otherwise it is difficult to conceive, if nothing more was meant than sending away the multitudes, how an event

so seemingly insignificant should find a place in the Divine history.

Q. But it is further written, that “when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain to pray; and when the evening was come, He was there alone.” What do you here understand by the Blessed Jesus “going up into a mountain to pray”?

A. These words, like all other parts of the Divine history, have both a literal and a spiritual signification; and according to the former, they literally mean that Jesus “went up into a mountain to pray,” but according to the latter, their meaning is, that the Blessed Jesus opened His Humanity to a fuller and closer communication with the Divinity in Himself; for by “a mountain” is figured and represented the Divine Love; agreeably to which idea mention is made in the Holy Word “of the mountain of the Lord of Hosts,” denoting the Divine Love of Jehovah, or the Eternal Father; and it is called also “the mountain of the Lord’s House,” which, according to the language of prophecy, was “to be established in the top of the mountains,” (Isa. ii. 2.) denoting the exaltation of the Divine Love over every inferior love, which was to take place under the Gospel dispensation. By “praying,” then, on this mountain, is to be understood an opening of the interiors of the mind of the Blessed Jesus to the reception of the Divine Love, or what is the same thing, of Jehovah in Himself; for prayer, properly understood, is nothing else but an opening of the interiors; in the case of man, an opening to what is spiritual and celestial; but in the case of the Lord, to what is Divine, or to the Eternal Father.

Q. And what do you further understand by the words which follow, that “when the evening was come He was there alone”?

A. By the “evening coming,” is to be understood the last state of the church, when there was no longer any good or any truth remaining in it; and by Jesus “being alone” at this time, was intended to be expressed His union with His Father, or the union of the Humanity with

the Divinity from which it came forth, agreeably to His own declaration in another place, where He says, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." (John xvi. 32.)

Q. But it is written that "the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary." What do you understand by these words?

A. By "the ship" here spoken of, it has already been shown, are to be understood the knowledges of what is good and true derived from the Word of God; and by "the sea" is here spiritually signified the scientific principle of the natural man, not yet obedient to those knowledges. By the ship, therefore, being "in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves," is to be further understood the agitation and disturbance excited in the natural man by the knowledges of goodness and truth imparted to the spiritual man, by reason of the contrariety between those knowledges and the affections prevailing in the natural mind. By "the wind being contrary," is, therefore, further signified this opposition between heavenly knowledge and natural love; for by "wind," according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood spiritual influence, in the present case infernal influence, because it is said to be "contrary" to the purposes of those who were principled in heavenly knowledges.

Q. And what do you conceive to be implied in what next follows, where it is said that "in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea"?

A. By "the fourth watch of the night" is meant the time immediately preceding morning, and by morning is signified, according to the spiritual idea, the time of the Lord's Advent, or of a new dispensation of heavenly truth for the restoration of the church. It is therefore said, that at this time "Jesus went unto them," that is to say, went to His disciples, denoting His Divine Presence and influence in His new church; and He is

further described as "walking on the sea," to denote His absolute rule over, and control of, all the disturbances of the natural man, or mind.

Q. But it is said, that "when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit: and they cried out for fear." How do you understand these words?

A. According to the sense of the letter, they are descriptive of the alarm of the disciples, at seeing their Divine Master walking on the sea; but according to the spiritual sense of the history, they represent the perturbation of mind which hath place with all those who are principled in the knowledges of what is good and true, but are not yet in the life of those knowledges, which is the life of love and charity. For when persons of this description begin to be made sensible in their own minds of the nearness of the Divine Presence, and of its Omnipotence in controlling the boisterous passions and unruly affections of the natural man, they are immediately struck with a secret awe and terror at observing the God of Heaven and the powers of the world to come so near at hand, whom they had been accustomed to view as at so great a distance. Under these circumstances, therefore, like the disciples in the ship, they are troubled, and say, "It is a spirit;" and they cry out for fear, not aware that what appears to them as a mere phantom, which hath no purpose but to create alarm, is in deed and in truth the dawning of eternal life, the manifestation of the kingdom and glory of the Incarnate God, thus the rising of "the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings," to be an everlasting Guide, Comforter, Protector, and Saviour.

Q. What, then, do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, "Straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid"?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words describe the consolation communicated to the troubled disciples by the audible voice of their Divine Master, assuring them that their fears were groundless, for that it

was He Himself; but according to the spiritual sense of the history, as it applies to the regeneration of man, the words are expressive of a Divine influx into the minds of those who are principled in the knowledges of what is good and true, but not yet in the life of those knowledges, instructing them that their alarms about the nearness of the Divine Presence and Omnipotence are unfounded. By the expression, therefore, "Be of good cheer," is to be understood an influx of Divine confidence; and by the additional expression, "It is I," [or, as it is written in the original, I AM,] is to be understood a manifestation of the Sole and Supreme Divinity of the Blessed Jesus, and of His Divine Power over all the turbulence of human passions; and, lastly, by the concluding words, "Be not afraid," is to be understood a communication of Divine strength, dispelling all the fears and inquietudes to which the natural mind is ever subject, when separated from the spiritual, and thus from the life of heavenly love and charity.

Q. But it is written afterwards, that "Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. By "Peter," according to the spiritual idea, is here to be understood the faith of the church, and especially that faith which acknowledges the Divinity of the Great Saviour, agreeably to what was shown in treating of the miracle of Peter's wife's mother being cured of her fever. (Matt. viii. 14, 15.) By "Peter," therefore, "answering, and saying, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water," is to be further understood a Divine impulse imparted to that faith by which it was led to acknowledge in the first place the Divinity of the Great Saviour, as expressed by the significant appellation, "Lord;" and in the next place was prompted to seek a closer conjunction with the Incarnate God, in the exercise of that Omnipotence by which He controlled all the lower principles of the natural mind, together with the infernal powers with which they were connected,

signified by the words, "If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water."

Q. And what do you understand by the words which immediately follow, where it is written, "And He said, Come ; and when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus ; but when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, Lord, save me" ?

A. By the Blessed Jesus saying, "Come," is to be understood the invitation of the Divine Love and Mercy, not only to Peter, but likewise to all believers, to enter into the closest state of conjunction with the Divine Omnipotence, especially in its control over the lower principles of the natural man. And by "Peter coming down out of the ship, and walking on the water to go to Jesus," is to be understood compliance with that invitation ; and by his further "being afraid, and beginning to sink, and crying, Lord, save me, when he saw the wind boisterous," is to be understood his weak and wavering faith, together with the weak and wavering faith of all those who are principled in the knowledge of holy things, but are not yet advanced far in the life of that knowledge, and who, consequently, feel alarmed when they hear and feel the boisterous wind of strong temptation.

Q. But it immediately follows, that "Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased." What instruction do you learn from these words ?

A. I learn, first, that the Blessed Jesus is ever attentive to the prayer of His children, and immediately supplies all their wants. I learn, in the second place, that the supply of the wants of His children is always effected by an exertion of His Omnipotence, represented and signified by "stretching out His hand." In the third place, I am instructed, that Omnipotence cannot help or save man, unless it operate on the principles of his life, represented and signified by "He caught him," or, as it might be better expressed, "laid hold of him." I further

learn, that the Blessed Jesus effects His saving and salutary purposes, in many cases, by wholesome reproof, which leads to serious self-examination about the cause of fear and unbelief, and is signified by Jesus saying to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And, lastly, I am instructed, that when the Blessed Jesus, together with a right faith, is admitted into the knowledges of what is good and true, immediately tranquility is restored, the wind of infernal influence ceases to blow, and there is "a great calm," signified by the concluding words, that "when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."

Q. And what do you learn from the concluding words in the history of this miracle, where it is written that "they who were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God"?

A. According to their plain and obvious sense, these words teach that the Divinity of Jesus Christ was again acknowledged by His followers, in consequence of His walking on the sea, and manifesting thus His power of control over the elements of nature; for it is said, that "they came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." But according to the more remote or spiritual idea, I learn from the above words that the Divinity and Divine Humanity of the Great Saviour were on this occasion acknowledged, and this by reason of the control which He exercised over the passions, the disturbances, the alarms, and the unbelief of the natural man or mind. For by Jesus walking on the sea, and supporting the wavering faith of Peter, this control is figured and represented; whilst by the worship which was paid, and by the confession, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God," is manifestly described the acknowledgment not only of His Divinity, but also of His Divine Humanity, according to which latter signification He was emphatically called the Son of God. It is, however, well to be considered, that this acknowledgment was made by those who were in the ship, to instruct us in the necessity of acquiring knowledges of

what is good and true from the Word of God, before such acknowledgment can be made ; for by “a ship,” as was shown above, are signified such knowledges.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. I learn, in the first place, from the letter of the history, an additional proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, confirmed by His walking on the sea, and calming its disturbed waters. I learn, further, from the spiritual sense of the history, the great necessity of acquiring the knowledges of what is good and true from the Word of God, which necessity is made known by Jesus constraining His disciples to go into a ship. I learn, again, the usual effect of those knowledges on the impure principles of the natural mind, in exciting disturbance, trial, and temptation, expressed in the history by the ship being “tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary.” But I learn, further, to my great consolation, that the Blessed Jesus is ever present in the midst of such disturbance, compelling it to make more manifest His Fatherly Mercy and Divine Omnipotence. From the example also of the Apostle Peter, who, when he saw the wind boisterous, was afraid, I am instructed what the weakness of human faith is, unless supported by, and in conjunction with, a Divine faith ; but from the same example, also, I learn that “all things are possible to him that believeth,” and that if human faith connect itself with Omnipotence, it also can “walk on the water,” and go to Jesus. Again, I learn that the Great Redeemer is ever stretching forth the hand of His Divine Omnipotence to succour His children in all their dangers, and to relieve them in all their fears, whilst at the same time He leads them to a diligent exploration of the causes of their alarms, by the friendly expostulation, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Lastly, I observe in “the ship,” which contained the Blessed Saviour and His disciples, a figure of the true church, and of every individual of the church, tossed on the boisterous waves of trial and temptation, yet riding in perfect safety and security,

under the rule and government of "Him who sitteth above the water floods, and remaineth a King for ever, be the earth never so unquiet." I am resolved, therefore, through the aid of His Divine favour and strength, so to apply myself to the study of the Eternal Truth, that I may find a place in that figurative "ship," and may thus be conveyed, in communion with the Blessed Jesus and His disciples, through all the storms and tempests of this lower world, to the haven of eternal rest in that happy world, where there is "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. xxi. 4.) AMEN.

THE SICK HEALED IN THE LAND OF GENNESARET.

MATT. xiv. 34—36.

“And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.”

Q. WHAT do you understand here by their “going over, and coming into the land of Gennesaret”?

A. According to the letter of the history, these words relate only to the passage of the Blessed Jesus and His disciples across the lake, and their arrival at the land on the other side; but, according to the spiritual sense, the words have respect to a change of state in the church, in consequence of the knowledges of good and of truth which had been imbibed, and which are represented by the ship in which they had sailed. For there is no circumstance in the life of the Blessed Jesus, as it is recorded in the Gospel, howsoever trivial it may appear, but what involves in it some spiritual and edifying instruction relative to Himself and to the new church which He came to establish. Besides, all the places in the land of Canaan are significative and representative, like the land of Canaan itself, which, it is well known, is significative and representative of the heavenly Canaan, or of the kingdom of heaven. This observation is true of the land of Gennesaret here mentioned, which, therefore,

is to be understood as having a spiritual signification and representation, like all other places recorded in the Gospel history. What its signification and representation is, may be known, in some degree, from the name itself, which properly signifies "the garden of the prince;" and since the term garden, wheresoever it occurs in the sacred history, is always applied to denote spiritual intelligence, and especially the intelligence derived from the Word of God, therefore by Jesus and His disciples coming into the land of Gennesaret is to be understood the church's advancement to a state of intelligence, effected by the knowledges of truth which had been previously admitted.

Q. But it is written, that "when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased." What do you conceive to be the meaning of these words?

A. According to the letter of the history, the above words relate to the men of Gennesaret informing all the country round about of the arrival of the Blessed Jesus, and to their bringing unto Him all that were afflicted with bodily diseases, that they might be healed. But according to the spiritual sense of the history, the words have reference to those in the church who are principled in intelligence, and who, from the light of intelligence, have knowledge of the Divine Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, and are, therefore, eager to bring every spiritual infirmity and disorder under the operation of that Omnipotence that so it may be removed, and the church thus restored to the blessed order and image of heaven and its God. For such is the nature of all true intelligence, that it is always employed in looking, by virtue of the light of heaven which it receives, first, at the Divine perfections, as made manifest in the Blessed Jesus, and secondly, at human imperfections, weaknesses, errors, and disorders, to the intent that, as far as possible, the latter may be operated upon by the former, and thus may make more manifest the Divine mercy and Omnipotence.

Q. And what do you learn from the words which

follow, where it is written—"And besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole"?

A. By the "garment" of the Blessed Jesus, as was shown in treating of the miracle concerning the bloody issue, (Matt. ix. 20—22.) is signified and represented the Divine Truth of His Holy Word—this being as a garment containing and investing the Divine Good of His love. By the hem of His garment is, therefore, to be understood the lowest or outermost principle of that truth, which principle is the letter or literal sense of the Word; and to touch this hem, of course means to have communication with the Blessed Jesus by means of that literal sense. When, therefore, it is said of the men of Gennesaret, that they besought Him that they might "only touch the hem of His garment," it is to denote the strong desire of those in the church who are intelligent, that every infirmity, error, and disorder of human nature may be submitted to the rule and guidance of the Eternal Truth, even in its lowest or outermost principles, as is the case when the letter of the Holy Word is seen and considered according to its proper sanctity, as being the sacred receptacle and basis of the treasures of the Divine wisdom and love stored up within it. It is, therefore, added, that "as many as were touched were made perfectly whole," to denote, that if the letter of the Holy Word be held in proper reverence, by regarding it as the consecrated tabernacle of all that is Divine; thus as the residence and abode of the Eternal and the Infinite, of all His attributes, and of all His perfections, it then never fails to communicate a healing virtue of efficacy sufficient for the removal of every infirmity and disorder of the human mind, so that they who before were spiritually blind, deaf, diseased, and infirm, are, by degrees, restored to the perfection of spiritual sight, hearing, health, and virtue.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this history?

A. I learn from this history that the church, in advancing towards perfection of life, which is the con-

junction of love and wisdom, and thus conjunction with the Lord, has to pass through several states, which may be called states of its regeneration, and that one of these states is a state of spiritual intelligence, figured by the land of Gennesaret, and resulting from the knowledges of what is good and true derived from the Word of God. I learn, further, that this state of intelligence conducts to the knowledge of the Incarnate God, signified by the men of Gennesaret having knowledge of Jesus, and that they who are in that knowledge from a perception of the Divine perfections, are ever desirous to submit all human infirmities and disorders to the control of the Divine Mercy and Omnipotence. Lastly, I learn that in this state of spiritual intelligence a discovery is made of the Divine virtue and presence ever operative in the letter of the Holy Word; and that by means of that operation the all of evil and of error is gradually removed in the minds of the penitent and the faithful who are willing to admit its healing influence. I am resolved, therefore, henceforth, to apply myself diligently and devoutly to the study of the pages of the Eternal Truth, that so, through the Divine mercy, I may attain to a state of spiritual intelligence, and thus be led to a discovery, not only of the perfections of the Incarnate God, but also of the interior evils and disorders of my own mind and life, which, without the light of such intelligence, must for ever remain hid, unacknowledged, and consequently unremoved. And I am further resolved to believe, like the men of Gennesaret, that a Divine and holy virtue is ever present from the Great and Holy God in the letter of His revealed Word; and that, consequently, if by a right faith and pure life I maintain communication with that Divine virtue, by submitting all my natural evils and errors to its purifying and controlling influence, I may then indulge the consolatory hope that sooner or later every disorderly affection, appetite, thought, word, or work will give place to the blessed order, purity, and peace of the Divine love and wisdom in my own happy bosom. AMEN.

THE DEVIL CAST OUT FROM THE DAUGHTER OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

MATT. xv. 21—28.

“Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me! But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Q. WHAT do you here understand by Jesus “departing into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by Jesus departing into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, is to be understood, that as to His body, or bodily presence, He really entered into those coasts. But whereas all that the Blessed Jesus did, all His journeyings, His sojournings, and His resting-places were significative and representative of spiritual and celestial things relating to His church and kingdom; and as all places in the land of Canaan, and bordering upon that land, were, in like manner, significative and representative, therefore by Jesus departing into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, is to be understood a state into which He entered as to His Humanity, in its progress towards union with His Divinity, corresponding to the spiritual signification of Tyre and Sidon.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the spiritual signification of those two places ?

A. These places, as being near the sea, and in the boundaries of the land of Canaan, were figurative of the knowledges, both interior and exterior, necessary for introduction into the church, or heaven, represented by the land of Canaan, "Tyre" being figurative of interior knowledges, and "Sidon" of exterior. As, therefore, the descent of the Blessed Jesus into Egypt, when He was a child, was figurative of His instruction in the scientifics of the church, with a view to the glorification of His human nature, or to making it Divine, in like manner, His "departure," here recorded, "into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," denotes His further instruction in the knowledges represented by those two places. Frequent mention is accordingly made in the Psalms and in the prophetic writings, both of Tyre and Sidon, and in all cases with reference to their internal spiritual signification, as above stated.

Q. But it is written, that "Behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." What do you here understand by "a woman of Canaan coming out of those coasts" ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by "a woman of Canaan coming out of those coasts," is to be understood such a woman coming out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon ; but according to the spiritual or internal sense of the history, is to be understood the affection of truth in the church ; for by "Canaan" is signified and represented the church ; and by "a woman," the affection of truth which constitutes the church ; and by this "woman coming out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," is further denoted the affection of truth emerging from the knowledges in which it was principled, and advancing to that state of purification and conjunction with the Supreme Good, to which those knowledges point.

Q. And what do you conceive to be implied in the words which follow, where it is written, "And cried unto

Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil" ?

A. By "crying unto Him," is to be understood the vehement affection from which she spake ; and by "saying," is further to be understood the expression of that affection in her thought ; and that this thought was grounded in a full persuasion of the Divinity and Divine Humanity of the Blessed Jesus whom she was addressing, is plain from the words which she applies on the occasion, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David." For by the exclamation, "Have mercy on me, O Lord," is manifestly expressed an acknowledgment of the Divinity of the Being to whom it was directed, and by the additional appellation of "Thou Son of David," is marked with equal emphasis the acknowledgment of His Humanity. It is added, "my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," to denote that the vehemence of her affection and the piety of her exclamation were grounded in the painful sentiment, that the heavenly good of love and of charity, which had been produced in her mind, was infested by the infernal opposite principles of evil and of defilement, for by "daughter" is signified such heavenly good, which had been produced from the affection of truth ; and by "being grievously vexed with a devil," is denoted the infestation excited by infernal evil and defilement.

Q. But it is said that "He (Jesus) answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away ; for she crieth after us." What do you here understand by "Jesus answering her not a word" ?

A. According to the literal idea, the expression means that He was silent ; but the spiritual idea involved in silence is that of astonishment, since this sentiment may be so great as to take away the use of speech. Thus it is written in the book of Revelation (chap. viii. 1), that "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour," to denote the astonishment or amazement of the angelic host at learning what was the state of the church, as it had been discovered in the preceding chapter. The

silence, therefore, of the Blessed Jesus on the present occasion, was the silence of astonishment, occasioned either by the faith of the suppliant woman who was addressing Him, and which He afterwards so highly commended, or by the consideration of the state of her unhappy daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil.

Q. And how do you understand the following words, where it is said, that “His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us”?

A. By the “disciples” are here to be understood those who have received the knowledge of truth in their understandings, but are not yet equally principled in the good of love and charity in their wills; and it is the nature and disposition of such persons to judge others from the spirit of truth or faith alone, and not from a principle of heaven-born love or charity. When, therefore, these disciples observed that the woman of Canaan was urgent with her entreaties in favour of her daughter, they would have sent her away without the blessing which she solicited, because she herself was not a disciple, or instructed in the doctrines or opinions which they had learned, and because she troubled them with her cries. And thus it is at this day, that they who are principled in the doctrine of faith alone, assigning it a pre-eminence over charity and good works, decide on the merits of others from their opinions more than from their practices, and reprobate all who do not receive their creed, whatsoever respect they may pay to the commandments of God.

Q. But it follows, that “He (Jesus) answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” What do you conceive to be the purport of these words?

A. These words, in appearance, seem to justify the disciples, who requested that He would send the woman away; but that this is only an appearance, and that the Blessed Jesus, therefore, did not mean to vindicate His disciples, is evident from the concluding part of the history, in which we read that He granted the woman’s

request. In like manner it is evident, from the words themselves, that Jesus did not intend absolutely to reject the petitions of the distressed woman, but only to try her faith, and thus to purify and to strengthen it. For when He says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He intended to teach His followers in all ages, that the grand end and design of His coming into the world was to assist and to save those who were principled in some degree of heavenly good, but who, for want of the knowledge of the truth, are in danger of being deprived of that good, all such being signified by "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is not, therefore, to be understood, that by "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," are meant only the Jews, or they who were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh; but the expression includes all those who were of the seed of Abraham according to the Spirit, that is to say, who possess the heavenly faith and love by which the patriarch was distinguished. Jesus Christ accordingly declares, concerning the publican Zaccheus, who was by birth a Gentile, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham," (Luke xix. 9.) evidently teaching that every one is a son of Abraham who, like the publican Zaccheus, is principled in that faith and love which seek to see Jesus who He is. (Verse 3.)

Q. And what do you learn from the succeeding words, where it is written, "Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me"?

A. I learn from these words that a true faith and love is not to be discouraged by any apparent rejection of its petition, or by any seeming repulsion on the part of the Almighty. For notwithstanding the silence of the Blessed Jesus in the first instance, and the subsequent reply, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," the distressed woman, who is the subject of this history, still persists in her adoration of her Redeeming Lord, and in her supplication for His Divine aid, thus instructing all future supplicants to persevere

patiently in all their spiritual purposes, and not to be dispirited, whatsoever apparent difficulties and obstructions may present themselves.

Q. And what do you learn, further, from the reply which the Blessed Jesus makes on the occasion, and which is expressed in these words, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs" ?

A. By the "children," are here to be understood, those of the church who receive and cherish the heavenly principles of goodness and truth in their hearts and lives ; and by their "bread" is to be understood the Holy Word which contains these principles, according to which idea it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Deut. viii. 3 ; Matt. iv. 4.) By "dogs," again, are here to be understood the Gentiles, or those who are out of the church where the Word is taught and received, and according to this sense the term is again applied in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where it is written concerning the latter, that "the dogs came and licked his sores," denoting that the ill effects resulting from false principles, which in the parable are here called "sores," were healed by the externally good affections of the Gentiles, or of those who were not in possession of the Word. Yet dogs are frequently spoken of in the Scripture in a bad sense, as denoting concupiscences and appetites, agreeably to which sense it is written in the book of Psalms, "For dogs have compassed me," (xxii. 16.) and in the Revelation, speaking of the holy city Jerusalem, "For, without are dogs." (xxii. 15.) When the Blessed Jesus, therefore, said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs," He taught an important lesson of Divine Truth, viz., that the Holy Word ought not to be imparted to those who are not in a disposition to receive it ; as He says also in another place, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." (Matt. vii. 6.) There is reason, however, to believe, that in the reply which He here makes to the distressed supplicant, He meant to try and to exercise the principles of her faith

and love, by presenting another apparently discouraging remark, and by such trial and exercise to purify the principles which were the subject of His operation. And that this was its effect, is evident from the answer made by the supplicant, where she says, "Truth, Lord; but the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table," for these words are evidently words of humiliation, and, at the same time, of adoration of the Divinity of the Great Saviour, also of assent to the truth which He delivered, implying likewise that such is the Divine Bounty, that all receive from it more or less of spiritual nourishment, and that, consequently, the Gentiles, who are here called "dogs," derive benefit from the revealed Word, and though not fed to the full like the "children," yet partake of the "crumbs" which fall from the plentiful table of the Great Creator and Preserver.

Q. But it is written, in the conclusion, that "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn, from these words, the blessed effect of patient perseverance in good desires and good purposes, and how, sooner or later, all difficulties and discouragements fall down before it; I learn, further, to distinguish this good effect by the three characters here given of it; first, as discovering to the woman the quality of her faith, and that it was a faith grounded in love and charity, signified by a "great" faith, for the term great is always applied in reference to that heavenly principle, or to its opposite; secondly, as discovering, further, that the quality of every one, and his condition hereafter, depend altogether on the state of his will or love, signified by the words, "be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" and thirdly, as promoting the deliverance of the affection of good in the church from the infestations of infernal evils, signified by the words, "and her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle ?

A. I learn, in the first place, that when the affection of truth in the church, by the acquirement of heavenly knowledge, is succeeded by the affection of good, which is the affection of heavenly love and charity, this latter affection is presently infested by evils, and by the infernal spirits who are in connection with those evils, and who seek to destroy it. I learn, further, that in this state of infestation, the Omnipotence of the Great Redeemer is sought for and supplicated, as the only power capable of removing the infestation. I learn, again, that the aid of this Omnipotence, according to appearance, is not immediately granted, and that many apparent difficulties and discouragements are wont to present themselves against it. Lastly, I learn that these apparent difficulties and discouragements only tend to the purification and confirmation of the good desires and purposes which they seemed to oppose ; and that, finally, through the Divine mercy and power of the Incarnate God, which had been solicited, all apparent obstacles are removed, the quality of heavenly good in the devout supplicant is made manifest, the ruling love is discovered to be the arbiter of man's eternal state, and infernal infestation is no longer suffered to assault and to vex the troubled spirit. I am resolved, therefore, that under all the infestations of evil spirits which are permitted to molest me, I will follow the example of the devout woman whose great faith is recorded in the above history, and, therefore, whatsoever discouragements may be thrown in my way, whether they be real or apparent, and howsoever my God and Saviour may delay the fulfilment of my desires and petitions, I will not cast away my confidence, but will still patiently persevere, until I hear from His Divine lips the consolatory words, "Great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." AMEN.

THE LAME, BLIND, DUMB, MAIMED, AND MANY OTHERS, HEALED.

MATT. xv. 30, 31.

“And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “great multitudes”?

A. By “great multitudes,” according to the sense of the letter, are to be understood great multitudes of people or persons; but according to the spiritual sense are to be understood multitudes of principles and persuasions; which principles and persuasions were disordered, according to the description given in the history of this miracle, some being “lame,” some “blind,” some “dumb,” some “maimed,” with many other disorders.

Q. And what do you mean by principles and persuasions of these several characters?

A. A principle and persuasion is “lame” when it has no orderly connection with the Fountain of Life, being destitute of that knowledge of genuine truth which is necessary to give it such connection, for without genuine truth, the Fountain of Life cannot descend into the life of man, neither can the life of man ascend to the Fountain of Life. Man, therefore, in such case, is “spiritually lame,” in like manner as he is “corporeally lame,” when a limb or member of the body has no orderly connection with the fountain of its life. Again, a principle or persuasion is “spiritually blind” when it is without the

intelligence of truth, or, what amounts to the same, without the light of heaven, since, as the body is blind, which has no eye capable of discerning the things of this world, in like manner the soul is blind, which hath no understanding capable of discerning the things of another world. Again, a principle or persuasion is dumb, when it cannot speak the praises of its Maker, and tell of all His wondrous works, since, as the bodily mouth is dumb, when it cannot give utterance to natural thoughts, so as to communicate them to others, for the same reason the spiritual mouth is dumb, when it cannot communicate to others its spiritual thoughts. Lastly, a principle or persuasion is maimed, when it is destitute of the love of the Supreme Good; in other words, when natural love is separated from spiritual love, since, as the body is maimed when injury is done to any of its members, so that the connexion is broken betwixt them and the heart, in like manner the spirit is maimed, when any perverse affection separates any of its members from the influences of heavenly love and charity.

Q. And what do you understand by what is further written, where it is said, that “they cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and He healed them”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, by these words is to be understood, that the lame, the blind, the dumb, and the maimed, were really laid at the bodily feet of Jesus, and that He healed them; but according to the above spiritual sense of this miracle, is to be understood, that the spiritually lame, the spiritually blind, the spiritually dumb, and the spiritually maimed, had access to the natural Humanity of the Blessed Jesus, and had thereby communication with the healing virtue flowing forth from the Divinity which dwelt in that Humanity, and was one with it. For as the feet of man are the lowest parts of his body, on which the higher parts stand and operate, they are, therefore, figurative and representative of the lower principles of his spirit, which principles are called natural, as being in the nearest connexion with the world of nature. Accordingly, the

term "feet" is frequently applied in the Sacred Scriptures to express the lower principles of man's natural life, as where it is written, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet;" (Ps. cxix. 105.) "He shall pluck my feet out of the net;" (Ps. xxv. 15.) "Thou hast set my feet in a large room;" (Ps. xxxi. 8.) "He hath set my feet upon a rock;" (xl. 2.) "He suffereth not our feet to be moved;" (lxvi. 9.) "As for me my feet were almost gone;" (lxxiii. 2.) "I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies;" (cxix. 59.) together with numberless other passages to the same purpose, all tending to prove that by "feet," when the term occurs in the Sacred Scriptures, are not to be understood the bodily feet only, but those external natural principles which are as feet to the mind. Accordingly, the Great Redeemer is described in the Revelation as to His feet, which are said to be "like unto fine brass" (chap. i. 15), to denote the purity of His natural principle when it was glorified or made Divine.

Q. But it is written, that "the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. From the "wondering of the multitude," I am instructed that nothing excites so much astonishment and adoration in the devout mind, as the contemplation of the operations of the Almighty, especially when those operations are exercised in the removal of man's spiritual disorders, and in his restoration thus to the order and life of heaven. This removal and restoration are signified by the dumb speaking, the maimed being whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, for under these four classes of infirmity and disorder, and of recovery, are involved all the evils and errors to which the nature of man is exposed, and from which, through the Divine Mercy, he hopes for deliverance. It is, therefore, added, "they glorified the God of Israel," because by the God of Israel, the same thing is understood as by the feet of the Blessed Jesus, viz., His Natural Humanity,

which is then said to be “glorified,” when it is devoutly approached as the only fountain of all spiritual life, virtue, power, and salvation. It is further to be observed concerning this appellation, “the God of Israel,” that in the Old Testament it is assumed by Jehovah Himself, who calls Himself “the God of Israel,” as being the Saviour of those who are signified by Israel, viz., His spiritual church, and who could not have been saved unless they could have approached their God as a man, and thus have attained conjunction with Him as a man. Such a man was the Great Redeemer as to His Natural Humanity, which Humanity He successively glorified until it became one with His Divinity, and thus He gives to His spiritual children perpetual access to, and conjunction with, Himself, whilst they, in their turn, receiving from His Divine Body a cure for all their spiritual disorders, glorify Him as the “God of Israel;” and in so doing, acknowledge Him to be the same identical Being with the Great Jehovah.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the combination of miracles here recorded?

A. I learn that in the church in general, and in every individual member of the church in particular, there are numberless and nameless principles and persuasions, many of which are in a state of infirmity and disorder, answering to the four classes recorded in the above history, called the “lame,” the “blind,” the “dumb,” and the “maimed.” I learn, further, that it is the wisdom of the church in general, and of every member of the church in particular, “to lay” these disordered principles and persuasions at “the feet” of the Blessed Jesus; in other words, to submit them to the blessed influence and control of His Divine Humanity, as the only medium of their access to, and conjunction with, the Supreme Divinity who is one with it. Lastly, I learn that the Blessed Jesus, in His Divine Humanity, is ever near, and Infinitely willing to administer a remedy from Himself for every infirmity, disorder, evil, and error, to which the nature of man is subject, whether consisting

in "lameness," which is the want of genuine truth, or in "blindness," which is the want of spiritual intelligence, or in "dumbness," which is the want of spiritual utterance, or in being "maimed," which is the want of genuine affection, and that the view of this His nearness and willingness, and of the blessed effects thereby produced, begets in the devout mind sentiments at once of astonishment and of adoration. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to imitate the multitudes above described, by looking attentively into the interiors of my own mind, and there discovering all that is "lame," "blind," "dumb," "maimed," with every other infirmity and disorder, and by "laying them," when discovered, "at the feet of the Blessed Jesus," and thus submitting them to the influence and control of His Divine Mercy, Wisdom, and Omnipotence, as manifested in His Divine Humanity. Thus, may I humbly hope, like the wondering multitude of old, to be excited to astonishment at the redeeming power of my God and Saviour, when I behold the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and thus, too, with them, observing that all these blessed effects are derived from His Divine Humanity, I may be admitted to the honour and happiness of glorifying with them the God of Israel. AMEN.

THE SEVEN LOAVES AND FISHES.

MATT. xv. 32—39.

“Then Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. And His disciples say unto Him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And He sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coast of Magdala.”

Q. In speaking of the miracle of the “five loaves” recorded in the foregoing chapter, you have already explained the principal circumstances attending this miracle, particularly in regard to the compassion of the Blessed Jesus, and also in regard to the loaves and fishes, and the baskets full of fragments which were taken up. Can you now tell me in what respects the present miracle differs from the former, and what is the ground of that difference?

A. The present miracle differs from the former in these four respects—first, that the number of loaves, in the present instance, was seven, whereas in the former case they were five; secondly, that on the present occasion the multitude were commanded to sit down on the ground, whereas on the former occasion they were commanded to sit down on the grass; thirdly, that the

number of men who were fed by the loaves, in the present instance, were four thousand, whereas in the former case they were five thousand; fourthly, that in the present instance the number of baskets taken up were seven, whereas in the former case they were twelve. It is remarkable, also, that in the original Greek the baskets mentioned in the two miracles are called by different names, for in the former miracle they are called "Cophinoi," whereas in the latter they are called "Spurides."

Q. And what do you conceive to be the ground of all these differences in the two miracles?

A. Each miracle is to be conceived as figurative and significative of a communication of heavenly good from the Blessed Jesus to His church, and of the reception of that good by His church. But the good communicated by the Blessed Jesus to His church is of two kinds, viz., the good of truth, or faith, and the good of love, or charity; and the former of these goods always precedes, and is intended to conduct to the latter. When, therefore, the church had been fed and nourished by the former of these goods, and the period was now arrived for its reception of the latter, this reception is here recorded in the Evangelical History, and marked with such distinct characters as to leave no doubt in the minds of the intelligent what is its distinct signification and meaning. For, in the first place, it is said of the multitude on this occasion that they had "continued with Jesus now three days," denoting a full state of instruction in spiritual knowledge, for by "three days" is to be understood a full and complete period; and by "continuing with Jesus" is further to be understood a state of instruction. In the second place, the number of loaves is recorded to be seven, and the number seven, it is well known, denotes what is holy, and is usually applied in the Sacred Scriptures to a state of love and charity; and therefore, on the present occasion, when applied to the loaves, is significative of holy nourishment, that is to say, the nourishment derived from love and charity. In the third place, the multitude were

commanded to sit down “on the ground,” not “on the grass,” as in the former miracle, denoting a state of more interior reception of good; for by ground is signified what is interior in respect to grass, which is its exterior product. In the fourth place, the number of men who were fed by these loaves are here said to be four thousand, and the number four, like the number two, from which it arises by multiplication, is always applied to denote a state of conjunction, thus the conjunction of love and wisdom, or of charity and faith; and, therefore, four thousand men, in the present instance, denote those of the church, in whom love and wisdom, or charity and faith, are conjoined. Lastly, the number of baskets taken up, on the present occasion, were seven, which number, as was above noted, is always applied to denote what is most holy, thus what relates to love and charity.

Q. You tell me that there are two kinds of spiritual good communicated by the Blessed Jesus to His church, viz., the good of truth, or faith, and the good of love, or charity. Will you now be pleased to inform me how you distinguish these two kinds of good from each other?

A. The good of truth, or faith, is the good done by man, whensoever he submits his life—that is to say, his affections, thoughts, words, and works—to be guided and governed by the principles of truth, or faith, operative in his understanding; thus, when he is under the leading of intellectual light, and is obedient to that light as proceeding from the revealed Word of the Most High. On the other hand, the good of love, or charity, is the good done by man, when he begins to rise above the principles of truth, or faith, in his intellectual mind, and to act from the higher principle of love to God and his neighbour operative in his will; thus, when he is no longer led by the light of truth, or faith, alone, but is governed, because warmed, by the genial heat of heaven-born regard to “God in the Highest, and goodwill toward men.” These two distinct classes of good are carefully to be discriminated from each other, being

in agreement with other distinctions frequently adverted to in the Sacred Scriptures, as with the distinction between “knowing” and “doing,” (John xxiii. 17.) between a “prophet’s reward” and a “righteous man’s reward,” (Matt. x. 41.) between “the wisdom of the serpent” and “the harmlessness of the dove,” (Matt. x. 16.) between the “sheep” whom Peter was required “to feed,” (John xxi. 16.) and the “sheep” which he was again required “to feed” (ver. 17). For by all these distinctions we are taught that the life of man consists of two distinct principles, viz., will and understanding—the will being created to be a receptacle of the Divine love as the understanding is created to be a receptacle of the Divine wisdom. We are therefore taught, further, by the same distinctions, that there are two kinds or degrees of heavenly good, or of that good which connects man with heaven, and is his qualification hereafter for admission into heaven, viz., the good produced by and from an enlightened understanding, and the good produced by and from a purified will. To conduct man, then, to the knowledge of these two kinds of good, and to teach him the importance of attending well to their distinct natures and qualities, appears to have been the design of the Divine Providence in the two miracles above recorded; the first of which was intended to teach the edifying lesson that the good of faith, or truth, is from Jesus Christ, and has conjunction with Him and His kingdom; whilst the second was intended to teach the edifying lesson that the good of love, or charity, is likewise from Jesus Christ, and in a still closer degree of conjunction with that Great God and His eternal kingdom.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle?

A. I learn, again, to adore the mercy and Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, who, on two several occasions, was pleased to supply His children in a miraculous manner with food and nourishment for their perishable bodies, and to convince them, under that striking

figure, of the infinitely more substantial and durable nourishment which He continually administers for the support and comfort of their immortal souls. I am taught further, by the above miracle, the edifying lesson, to distinguish the nourishment of the soul into two kinds, viz., that which is imparted by means of heavenly truth, or faith, in the understanding, and that which is produced by love and charity in the will. I am still further instructed that both the one and the other of these two kinds of good is admissive of the bliss of heaven, and, consequently, is a qualification for introduction into the societies of heaven, because both the one and the other is in connection with Jesus Christ, proceeding from Him, leading to Him, and abiding in Him. I am resolved, therefore, to attend well in my own mind to these two distinct kinds and orders of heavenly good, and so to feed upon the former that I may finally be qualified to partake of the latter. Thus may I hope, through the Divine mercy, to be one of the "four thousand" who had the high happiness of being fed by their God and Saviour; and thus, too, will some part of "the seven loaves" become my portion, and, eating to the glory of God and the nourishment of my soul in His mercy and goodness, I shall also rejoice in taking up "seven baskets full" of holy fragments. AMEN.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

MATT. xvii. 1—9.

“ And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them ; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While He yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.”

Q. CAN you see any reason why Peter, James, and John were selected, on this occasion, from the rest of the disciples, to be present at the Lord's transfiguration ?

A. The reason appears to be grounded in the figurative or representative character of those three apostles ; for by “ Peter,” as hath been before hinted, is figured or represented the faith of the church, particularly that faith which acknowledges the Divinity of the Great Redeemer ; by “ James,” again, is figured or represented the principle of charity in the church, or that principle from God, by virtue wherof man is enabled to love his neighbour as himself ; and by “ John ” is figured or represented the operation of charity, or that application to good and useful works, which has a tendency at once to promote the glory of God, to increase the sum of

human happiness, and to purify and strengthen by exercise the heavenly principle in which it is grounded. The reason, then, why the Blessed Jesus selected these three disciples to be witnesses of His transfiguration was probably this—to teach the edifying and instructive lesson, that none are capable of beholding the glory of the Great Saviour in His oneness with the Eternal Father but such as are principled in the “faith” represented by Peter, in the “charity” represented by James, and in the “good works” represented by John.

Q. And can you see any reason why this selection was made “after six days,” or why after six days the Blessed Jesus was pleased to manifest His interior glory to those three disciples ?

A. The reason appears to be grounded in the spiritual signification of six days, which imply a full state of previous labour, or spiritual combat, as a state preparative for admission to a nearer and closer conjunction with the principles of heavenly life, and thus with the Lord of Heaven, than could be attained without such labour or combat. Thus, in the fourth commandment, mention is made of six days’ labour, as preparative to the seventh, or Sabbath-day, because by the six days’ labour are there signified all the trials, conflicts, and temptations necessary for man’s purification before he can be qualified to enter into that holy rest signified by the Sabbath or seventh day. Thus, too, the history of creation or of man’s regeneration, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, is described as the work of six days, to denote, again, all the states of previous labour and conflict necessary to conduct man to the complete regeneration, or to that blessedness of Divine order, life, and peace, signified by the seventh day.

Q. But it is written of the Blessed Jesus and His disciples, on this occasion, that “He bringeth them up into a high mountain.” What do you understand, here, by bringing them “up into a high mountain ?”

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words are to be understood literally, as teaching that the Blessed

Jesus brought the three disciples up into a high mountain of the matter and measure of this lower world; but according to the spiritual idea of a "high mountain," the expression is figurative, like the six days above spoken of, and the thing figured by it is a state of heavenly love, resulting from a near and close conjunction of life with the Divine Fountain of Life. Thus it is written in regard to this figurative meaning, "O Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;" (Psal. xxx. 7.) and thus, too, the mountain of the Lord's house is said to be "established in the top of the mountains, and to be exalted above the hills;" (Isa. ii. 2.) in both which passages it is evident that the term "mountain" is applied figuratively, as in numberless other parts of the Sacred Scriptures, to denote a state of holy love, communicated from the Most High, and in conjunction with Him. "Mountain," then, as applied to the Lord Himself, denotes the Divine love, and as applied to His disciples, denotes love derived from the Divine. The spiritual meaning, therefore, of the above words, as connected in a series, is this, that after the period of previous preparation, they who are principled in faith, in charity, and in works of charity, are exalted to a state of holy conjunction with Jesus Christ in the blessed principle of His love.

Q. And what do you learn from the words which follow, where it is written, that "He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light?"

A. The original word here rendered "transfigured" signifies more properly transformed, and the genuine idea of transformation, when applied to a person, is the presenting an aspect different from what he usually presents: thus, as applied in the present case to the Blessed Jesus, it denotes His presenting the aspect of His Divinity, or of His Divine Humanity, instead of that infirm humanity in which He was usually presented to view. It therefore follows, that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light;" because by His face is to be understood His interior mind, or spirit, the face

being the figure or index of the interiors, agreeably to which idea so frequent mention is made in the Sacred Scriptures of the face, or countenance, of Jehovah and of God, as denoting His Divine mercy and love, thus His essential life. By His face, then, shining as the sun, is to be understood, that the interior mind, or soul, of the Blessed Jesus was seen to be Divine Good, the sun being a figure or emblem, in outward nature, of Divinity, and of His essential life, since, what the sun is to the natural world and its inhabitants, the Divinity is to the spiritual world and its inhabitants. It is accordingly added, that "His raiment was white as the light," because as the "face" of the Blessed Jesus is a figure or index of His interior mind or soul, in like manner His "raiment" is a figure or index, equally striking, of the external principle with which the internal is invested; and as the internal principle, agreeably to what was shown above, is His Divine good or love, therefore the external principle, here denoted by raiment, is His Divine truth or wisdom, inasmuch as Divine truth or wisdom is always proceeding from the Divine good, or love, and investing it as a garment; according to which idea it is written of Jehovah, that "He covereth Himself with light as with a garment." (Ps. civ. 2.) This garment, therefore, is here said to be, "white as the light," because whiteness is figurative of the purity of truth, and is constantly so applied in the Sacred Scriptures; and "light" is alike figurative of the truth itself, and is as constantly applied in the Sacred Scriptures according to that figure. If the sense, then, of this verse, be connected in a series with that of the foregoing verse, the whole will run thus—that they of the church, who are principled in faith, in charity, and in works of charity, after previous preparation, are elevated into a state of heavenly love, in which state the intellectual mind is opened to a sight of the Blessed Jesus in His Divine Humanity, as the Only God of heaven and earth, because the only source of all heavenly love and wisdom, consequently, of all heavenly life, thus as the Sun of the

eternal world, beaming forth perpetually with the heat and light of the Divine Mercy and Loving-kindness.

Q. But it is next written, that, "behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." How do you understand these words?

A. These words have both a literal and a spiritual meaning, and the lesson which they teach according to each meaning is important and edifying. For according to their literal meaning, they overthrow at once the creed of the infidel, who denies a resurrection, by assuring us that Moses and Elias were then alive; and at the same time they expose the fallacy by which they are misled, who conceive that souls after death are not sensible of life and existence until the day of the general resurrection, when they shall be united again with their perishable bodies. In their spiritual sense, again, they inculcate a doctrine still more interesting and instructive, because by Moses and Elias, according to this sense, the same thing is meant as by Moses and the Prophets, mentioned in other parts of the Sacred Scriptures, viz., the historical and prophetical Word,—by Moses the historical Word, and by Elias the prophetical; and since these two persons appeared talking with the Blessed Jesus, it is further to be understood, according to the spiritual idea, that the historical and prophetical Word was seen in its internal sense, ever treating of that Incarnate God and His kingdom. If the spiritual sense, then, of this verse be connected in a series with that of the two foregoing verses, the whole will read thus—that they who are principled in faith, in charity, and in works of charity, are not only elevated into a blessed sphere of heavenly love, in which they behold Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity shining as a sun, and dispensing from His bright countenance the beams of heavenly love and light, but also have a perception of the Holy Word, both as to its historical and prophetical pages, and see it in perpetual connection with its Divine source, from whom it derives the fulness of its life, its sanctity, its wisdom, and its power.

Q. And what instruction do you learn from the following verse, where it is written, that “then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” ?

A. I learn from these words the proper quality and character of those in the church who are principled in a genuine and living faith, viz., that in the first place they say with Peter, “it is good for us to be here ;” in other words, they think it their highest happiness to enjoy the blessing of interior communion with their God and Saviour, adoring His perfections, contemplating His glory, and perceiving, to their great joy, how He and His Holy Word are connected together by a bond of indissoluble union, whilst He is the All of its life, its light, and its energy ; and in the second place, that they say further, “let us build three tabernacles,” &c. &c., because they are ever intent on fixing their happiness in themselves, by inviting the Blessed Jesus to come and dwell with them, together with all the goods and truths of His Holy Word, and by thus consecrating their souls and bodies, with every principle in both, as sacred habitations, devoted to the everlasting residence of the Great Father of Life, attended by all the angelic powers of purity, sanctity, peace, and benediction.

Q. But it follows, that “while He yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye Him.” What do you conceive to be the meaning of these words ?

A. By the “bright cloud,” which is here said to have “overshadowed” the disciples, is to be understood the letter or literal sense of the Holy Word, made resplendent from its internal or spiritual sense, for the letter of the Holy Word, in respect to its internal light and lustre, is as a cloud ; a bright cloud if the internal sense be seen through it, but a dark cloud if it be not seen. Accordingly, the term “cloud” is frequently applied in other parts of the Sacred Scriptures, to denote the

obscurity of the letter of the Holy Records, when compared with their internal glory and splendour, as where it is written, "Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds," where by "Thy truth" is meant the interior sense of the Divine Word; and by "reaching unto the clouds" is meant its extent to, and limitation in, the sense of the letter; so again it is written, "He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night," (Ps. cv. 39.) where by "a cloud for a covering" is again to be understood the letter of the Divine Word at once hiding and defending its interior holy contents. Again, to the same purport, "Who maketh the clouds His chariot," (Ps. civ. 3.) denoting that the literal sense, or history, of the Sacred Scriptures is as a vehicle for the conveyance of the spiritual or internal sense to the minds of men. Accordingly, Jesus Christ, in describing His second advent, expresses Himself in these remarkable words, "Then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," (Matt. xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26.) where by the "Son of Man" is evidently meant the Lord in His Divine Humanity; and by His "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," is further to be understood His manifestation of Himself, through the letter of His Holy Word, in all the goods and truths of its interior contents.

Q. And in what sense do you understand what is further written, "Behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him"?

A. By "a voice out of the cloud," is to be understood instruction from the letter of the Word, and by this voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him," is further to be understood the Lord in His Divine Humanity, who is one with the Eternal Father, and who is, therefore, to be attended to and obeyed as the God of heaven and earth, and the only Source of all Divine love and wisdom, thus of all goodness and truth.

Q. But it is written, further, that "when the disciples

heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of these words?

A. According to their literal sense, they contain a description of the fear which fell on the disciples when they heard the voice from the cloud; but according to the spiritual idea contained in the letter, they describe the effect wrought in the minds of all true disciples, when they are instructed concerning the Lord's Divine Humanity, which effect first manifests itself in devout humiliation, signified by the disciples falling on their face, and next, in a sacred awe of adoration, signified further by their being sore afraid; agreeably to which idea it is written of John, in the Revelation, that when he had a sight of Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity, he "fell at his feet as dead." (i. 17.) For such is the effect produced in the natural mind by the first discovery of the Incarnate God, dwelling in His Glorified Humanity as the God of heaven and earth, which effect results from the greater nearness and more powerful presence of the Divine Being in that manifestation.

Q. And what do you understand by what next follows, that "Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid"?

A. These words, according to their literal meaning, have relation to the three disciples, Peter, James, and John; but according to their spiritual meaning, they relate to all those who are represented by Peter, James, and John, viz., those who are principled in faith, those who are principled in charity, and those who are principled in works of charity; and according to this meaning, by Jesus "coming" to them is signified Divine presence, and by His "touching" them is signified communication of Divine virtue, or power; and by saying "arise," is further signified spiritual elevation, or elevation of the mind's affections and thoughts, in consequence of that Divine virtue, or power; and by His adding "be not afraid," is lastly denoted Divine confidence resulting from that elevation.

Q. And what instruction do you learn from what is afterwards written, that “when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only”?

A. By “lifting up their eyes” is denoted an elevation of the understanding, in consequence of the former elevation of the affections and thoughts; for when the affections and thoughts are raised out of worldly ends to the contemplation and pursuit of eternal objects, the understanding is presently elevated in the same degree, and begins to be employed in the intellectual perception of those objects; and when this is the case, then is fulfilled, too, what is here further written, where it is said that “they saw no man, [or as it is expressed in the original, no one] save Jesus only;” for when the understanding is elevated to the perception of Divine and spiritual objects, then it begins soon to be seen that all those objects are included in the person of the Blessed Jesus—in other words, that Jesus, in His Divine Humanity, is the All of heaven, the All of the Holy Word, the All of the church on earth, the All of every member of the church, because the All of goodness and truth, consequently the All of salvation and eternal life. Thus, when the understanding is elevated to spiritual perception, Jesus alone is seen as the All in All of everything both Divine and human.

Q. But it is lastly written, that “when they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.” What do you understand by these words?

A. By their “coming down from the mountain” is denoted a descent from the state of love and affection to which they had been elevated into the duties of common life, by application to purposes of use; and by Jesus “charging the disciples,” on this occasion, to “tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead,” is to be understood, according to the sense of the letter, that they should not tell what they had seen to any one, until Jesus Christ “was risen from

the dead;" but according to the spiritual sense of the above words, the caution of the Blessed Jesus was to this effect, that they who had been favoured with intellectual elevation and perception, should be careful of imparting their spiritual communications to those who are not in a state capable of receiving and profiting by them—that is to say, in whom the Son of Man is not risen from the dead, for by "the Son of Man" is here to be understood the truth of the Holy Word; and by this Son of Man being "risen from the dead," is spiritually to be understood the resurrection, manifestation, and operation of that truth in the natural mind of man which was before "dead in trespasses and sins"—that is to say, in mere natural affections and thoughts.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle of the transfiguration?

A. I learn, in the first place, that there are three heavenly principles from Jesus Christ in which He chiefly delights, and which He implants in the minds and lives of all His regenerate children, viz., faith, charity, and the operation of charity, commonly called good works. I learn, further, that they who are wise to cherish in themselves these three principles are exalted by them into the sphere of the Divine love, and in that elevation have an interior sight in their mind's eye of the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ in His oneness with the Eternal Father, beholding Him as the Divine source of all celestial good and truth. I learn, also, that in the same elevation they are favoured with a view of the Holy Word, and have their eyes open to see that it treats throughout of the Great Saviour, and as to its internal contents is in continual connection with Him, being full of His Divine love and wisdom. I learn, further, that it is the quality and character of a true faith to delight in such views of Jesus Christ and His Word, and that they who are principled in such a faith desire nothing more than to make their own minds the sacred tabernacles, or abodes, of that Great God and His revealed will. Again, I am taught that the letter of the

Holy Word is as a bright cloud, overshadowing, covering, and defending its internal contents, and is ever bearing testimony to the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ, and His oneness with the Eternal Father, which testimony begets profound humiliation and sacred awe in the minds of the penitent, whereby they are admitted to a closer communication with their Saviour God, and are, at the same time, made sensible in their minds of the elevation which it begets and of the confidence which it inspires. Lastly, I learn that in that elevation of the understanding Jesus Christ is seen as the All in All of His Holy Word, of heaven and of the church, but that this view cannot be imparted to those who do not suffer their minds to be elevated and enlightened by the eternal truth. I am resolved, therefore, to cherish in my mind, above all things, the above heavenly principles of faith, of charity, and of the operation of charity, that so, being elevated into the region of angelic love, I may view with the eye of faith the Divine Humanity of the Incarnate God, and may further be enabled to see how His Holy Word is continually treating of the glorification of that Humanity, and is thus full of Divine love and wisdom, even in the sense of the letter. Thus may I hope, like the three disciples of old, to experience in myself the blessed effects of this heavenly view, by being led into profound humiliation and adoration, and thereby into fuller communication with my God and Saviour, and a more complete reception of His love and life. And thus, too, may I humbly hope to be enabled to discover, to my unspeakable joy, that Jesus Christ, in His Divine Humanity, is the All in All of love, of wisdom, and of life,—thus the All of heaven, the All of the church, the All of salvation, and the All of bliss, because the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev. i. 8.) AMEN.

THE LUNATIC HEALED.

MATT. xvii. 14—21.

“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to Me. And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by the “man kneeling down to Jesus, and saying, Lord have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic”? &c. &c.

A. According to the literal sense of this history, by the “man” here spoken of is meant one who supplicates the Blessed Jesus in favour of his lunatic son; but according to the spiritual or internal sense, by the man here spoken of is represented and signified the church as to the understanding of truth; and by his kneeling down to Jesus, is to be understood profound humiliation; and by his saying “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed,” is further denoted devout acknowledgment of the Divinity of the Great Saviour, attended with fervent supplication to be delivered from the infestation occasioned by false principles in their

connexion with the powers of darkness. For, by "son," according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood truth in the understanding; and by this son being "lunatic and sore vexed," is further denoted the infestation of that truth by false principles. For the term "lunatic" literally means one who is affected by the changes of the moon; and since the moon, according to its spiritual signification in a good sense, has respect to the principles of faith, and is representative of those principles, as the sun has respect to the principle of love, and is representative of that principle, therefore by "lunatic," as the word is here applied in a bad sense, is to be understood the persuasion of truth infested by false principles, on which account it is said to be "sore vexed."

Q. But it is added that "oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." What do you understand by these words?

A. According to their literal sense, they are to be understood literally as having relation to elementary fire and water, and to the man falling alternately into these elements; but according to the spiritual idea, by "fire" and "water" are here to be understood the distinct spiritual principles in which the above infestation of truth originated, "fire" denoting in this case the concupiscences of evil, and "water" the false persuasions derived from those concupiscences. For such is the nature of all spiritual infestation of heavenly truth, whenever that truth is first made manifest in the human understanding, since on this occasion the natural hereditary evils, which as yet have not been discovered and subdued, begin to assault, with endeavour to destroy, this first dawning of the eternal light by claiming that light as their own, and not allowing it to bow down and acknowledge its Divine Parent. In the meantime the truth labours to defend itself under this assault, because the truth always points upwards towards heaven, and seeks conjunction with the God of Heaven. Moreover, the truth is ever intent on connecting itself with charity, and bringing forth the fruits of a pure and holy life,

whereas hereditary evils are always eager to connect the truth with self-love and the love of the world, and to do works apparently good, but which have no real goodness in them, because not done to the glory of God. Hence, then, arises the infestation which is here described by being "lunatic and sore vexed," and by "oft-times falling into the fire, and oft into the water."

Q. And what do you conceive to be the meaning of the words which immediately follow—"I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him"?

A. These words imply, according to their literal sense, that the disciples were not able to cure the lunatic, who was sore vexed; but according to their spiritual sense, they imply that the disciples were not yet sufficiently instructed in truths to combat and cast out the evil spirit by which the understanding of truth in the church was infested. For, from the history of this miracle, especially as it is recorded by Mark, it appears that this evil spirit was under the influence of false principles, for he is there described as foaming and gnashing with his teeth, (ix. 18.) which expressions are constantly applied in the Sacred Scriptures to denote the collision of erroneous persuasions in their combat against truth. In answer, therefore, to the question proposed afterwards by the disciples, "Why could not we cast him out?" the Blessed Jesus replies, "Because of your unbelief," which is the same thing as if He had said, Because ye are not yet principled in truths; for all faith is formed from truths, and therefore the want of truths is the real source of all unbelief.

Q. But it is written that "Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour." What instruction do you receive from these words?

A. From these words I am instructed, first, in the awful and fallen state of the Jewish church at that time,

which drew from the Great Saviour the severe rebuke of being a "faithless and perverse generation;" for, by being faithless is implied that they were destitute of all heavenly truth, and by being perverse that they were alike destitute of all heavenly good. I learn, secondly, from the affectionate expostulation, "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" that the compassionate love of the Blessed Jesus is not to be exhausted by any degree of faithlessness and perverseness on the part of man. This compassionate love, therefore, still addresses itself to its infested children, labouring in the combat of truth against error, and of error against truth, and says of every suffering child—"Bring him hither to me." It also still rebukes the infesting and infernal power until he departs out of the infested subject; so that again is fulfilled what is here written, that "the child was cured from that very hour." Thus doth every infestation arising from the powers of darkness tend still, if it be resisted, to make more manifest both the mercy and the Omnipotence of the Incarnate God.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the force and meaning of the following words of the Blessed Jesus on this occasion, where He says—"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you"?

A. By "faith" is here to be understood a faith in the Incarnate God, which is compared to a grain of mustard seed, because in its commencement it is small, inasmuch as at that period man is led to believe that it is from himself, and not from God. Nevertheless, the Blessed Jesus declares even of this faith that it is capable of "removing mountains," by which mountains are to be understood spiritually the evils of self-love and the love of the world, since as a mountain, in a good sense, is representative and significative of heavenly love, so in the opposite sense it is representative and significative of infernal love, according to which latter sense a caution

is given in the prophet against "the feet stumbling upon the dark mountains;" (Jer. xiii. 16.) and again, "I am against thee, O destroying mountain;" (Jer. li. 25) and again, "Every mountain shall be brought low;" (Isa. xl. 4.) not to mention many other passages from the Sacred Scriptures to the same purpose. It is added, on this occasion, in the Gospel according to Luke, that this same faith is capable of removing a sycamore tree, for thus it is written, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you," (chap. xvii. 6.) where by a "sycamine tree" is to be understood the persuasion of what is false originating in evil. Jesus Christ would, therefore, here teach us the power of a Divine faith, by virtue of which a true Christian is enabled to remove from himself all infestations, whether arising from evil or from error, and to cast them into the infernal pit from whence they proceed. It is, therefore, lastly added, "Nothing shall be impossible to you," because under the influence of the above faith the true Christian connects his will with the Divine will, his wisdom with the Divine wisdom, and his ability with the Divine ability, in such a sort that he can no longer will, desire, or endeavour to obtain anything but what is in agreement with the will, the desire, and the operation of his Heavenly Father, and thus all things are possible to him, because all his inclinations and purposes are submitted to the inclinations and purposes of the Most High.

Q. But it is added lastly, "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. By these words Jesus Christ would teach the importance and necessity of two other Christian duties; in addition to the grace of a Divine faith, one of which He calls "prayer," and the other "fasting;" and He would further instruct us that there are certain assaults from the powers of darkness which cannot be successfully opposed but by the combined force of those two duties.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the proper nature and meaning of those duties ?

A. By "prayer," as the term is usually applied in the Sacred Scriptures, I am to understand an opening of the interiors of the human mind towards heaven and its God, by virtue of a devout desire implanted by the Almighty to become partaker of His life, and to enter into the blessedness of an eternal conjunction with Him in love ; and by "fasting," I am further to understand a closing of the exteriors of the mind against the deceitful and insinuating delights of the senses, by denying the concupiscences of the world and of the flesh, which would intrude themselves under the semblance of real and substantial goods. Fasting, indeed, is often limited to a more confined meaning, as implying only an occasional abstinence from particular kinds of bodily food, and in some cases from all food ; but according to the most general acceptation of the term, it denotes not only abstinence from bodily food, but from mental also, which latter abstinence consists in denying to the mind its favourite external gratifications, whensoever they interfere with the internal superior and spiritual joys of the immortal soul. Prayer and fasting are accordingly joined together by the Blessed Jesus as Christian duties, because whilst the former opens the mind towards heaven, and renders it admissive of heavenly influence, the latter shuts the door against the powers of darkness, and thus prevents those powers from intruding upon and disturbing the life, the peace, and the order of heaven, which enter in at the other door.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle ?

A. By the literal sense of the miracle I learn an additional testimony in favour of the Omnipotence of the Great Redeemer, and am thus led to a more profound adoration of Him as the only God of heaven and earth. At the same time, from the spiritual sense of the miracle, I am instructed in several interesting particulars respecting that order of spiritual or regenerate life which is pre-

scribed to all Christians ; as first, that when the knowledge of the truth is first admitted into the human understanding, it is frequently infested by false persuasions, originating with the powers of darkness ; secondly, that this infestation can only be successfully combated by faith in the Incarnate God, or in the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ ; thirdly, that this faith is all-powerful, insomuch that there is no “mountain” of evil, of difficulty, and of danger which it cannot remove, nor any noxious plant of erroneous persuasion which it cannot cast into the sea ; fourthly, that besides this grace of faith, the sincere Christian is gifted also with the two graces of prayer and fasting, by the united aid of which he is enabled to control the powers of darkness, and gain victories over himself and them, which could not otherwise be effected. I am resolved, therefore, to cherish henceforth in my mind and life, above all other things, these three Christian graces of faith, of prayer, and of fasting, under a full confidence that through their aid I shall be enabled, not only to overcome all spiritual infestation in my understanding, but also to remove from my heart and life every opposing evil, and to surmount every difficulty and perplexity which would thwart me in my good purpose to become a regenerate Christian. Thus may I humbly hope to find realised in myself what is written in the above history, where it is said, “The child was cured from that very hour,” together with those other blessed words of my Saviour God, “Nothing shall be impossible unto you.” AMEN.

THE PIECE OF MONEY FOUND IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.

MATT. xvii. 24—27.

“ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute ? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money ; that take, and give unto them, for Me and thee.”

Q. What do you understand, here, by the word “ tribute ” ?

A. According to its literal sense, it means a tax imposed by the Roman government on all those who were not Roman citizens, and thus free men ; but according to the spiritual idea, by “ tribute ” is to be understood a mark of servitude, and therefore, according to this idea, the inquiry, “ Doth not your Master pay tribute,” is an inquiry respecting the principles of servitude and of freedom, and who are the subjects of those principles.

Q. But it follows, that Peter replies to this question in the affirmative, saying, “ Yes ; ” and that “ when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ? ” What instruction do you learn from these words ?

A. From the letter of these words I learn that another inquiry was made, and this by Jesus Christ Himself, about custom or tribute, and of whom it is to be taken. I learn, also, from the same source, a further proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, as discoverable from this circumstance, that He was acquainted with the thoughts of Peter, and therefore, as it is said, "prevented" him, or as it might be otherwise expressed, "anticipated what he had to say." But from the spiritual sense of the words, I am instructed that Jesus Christ Himself suggests the important question, to all true believers, concerning servitude and freedom, which question leads to the interesting and edifying conclusion, that the spiritual principle in man is "free," and intended to be so, but that the natural principle "serves," and was created for that purpose. For it can never be supposed that the Incarnate God would propose to His apostle Peter an inquiry which had no deeper ground than an investigation concerning the right of taking custom or tribute, if nothing of a more spiritual nature had been involved in the inquiry. Accordingly this Incarnate God testifies in another place, "The words that I speak unto you, are spirit and are life;" (John vi. 63.) but what "spirit" or what "life" is discoverable in the above question, if it be conceived to relate only to the custom or tribute taken by the kings of the earth?

Q. But how does it appear that this inquiry leads to the conclusion that the spiritual principle in man is "free," and was intended to be so, but that the natural principle "serves," and was created for that purpose?

A. This appears from the two terms here applied by Jesus Christ, viz., "their own children and strangers," when spoken of "the kings of the earth." For in the language and idea of the Incarnate God, by kings of the earth are not here to be understood kings of the earth according to the literal sense of the words, but according to the spiritual sense, agreeably to which latter sense by kings of the earth are to be understood the primary or principal truths of the church, for in the church all rule

and dominion are derived from truths, and therefore all in the church, who are principled in truth, are called kings and princes in the Sacred Scriptures. By the "children," then, of these "kings," are to be understood all those in the church who receive truth into their minds and lives, thus—all who are spiritually minded; whilst by "strangers" are to be understood all who do not admit truths into their minds and lives, thus who remain in a merely natural state, and are naturally minded. When, therefore, Peter answered, "of strangers," and when Jesus Christ replied, "Then are the children free," the conclusion is plain—that the naturally minded pay tribute, or serve, but that the spiritually minded are exempt from tribute, or are free.

Q. But the Blessed Jesus continues His discourse in these words: "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee." What further instruction do you derive from these words?

A. From the literal sense of these words, I am again led to adore the Divine Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, together with His compassionate tenderness expressed in His willingness not to give offence. For in preparing a fish, which should supply a piece of money sufficient to answer the demands of those who received tribute, He gave a full and unequivocal demonstration of Divine Omnipotence; and when He assigns as a reason for this, "lest we should offend," He gives a proof, equally positive, of His compassionate tenderness, leading Him to make all reasonable allowance for the customs and laws of civil society; as He says in another place, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." (Matt. xxii. 21.) But if the literal sense of the above words be thus edifying, how much more is their spiritual sense! For according to their spiritual sense they confirm, in terms the most significative, and by images the most striking and instructive, what has

been above observed concerning the two principles, the natural and the spiritual, by proving that the former serves, but that the latter is free. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, does not send His apostle into the street, as He might have done, to seek and to find a piece of money, nor doth He send Him, as He might have done with equal success, to borrow it of His neighbours; but He sends him to the sea, because the sea is a representative figure of the natural principle above adverted to, agreeably to what was observed in the explanation of a former miracle, (Matt. viii. 23—27.) He bids him also “cast a hook” into this sea, and “take up the fish that first cometh up,” because both the hook and the fish were significative as well as the sea, the “hook” being significative of the power of apprehending, and the “fish” being significative of what was to be apprehended, viz., something of a scientific nature which had life in it, and which was accordingly distinct from the dead principle in which it originated, because it was not merely natural, but by virtue of its connection with a spiritual principle, or with some end of use, might be called spiritually-natural. In the mouth of this fish, therefore, was to be found a piece of money, [in the original a “stater,” which was a piece of silver,] because a piece of money, or a piece of silver, is a figure equally striking with the foregoing, of truth from a spiritual origin, to which a living principle of science is ever open, and with which it is connected. For the principle of science in man may be either alive or dead, according to the end which it respects, and to which it is directed,—being alive if it respects an eternal end, but dead if it respects only a temporal end. It is the living principle of science, therefore, in which alone the “piece of money” is to be found, because it is only the living principle of science which is open to truth from a spiritual origin, and in connection with it. The Blessed Jesus, then, would thus teach Peter, and with Peter all who are principled in evangelical faith, the necessity of consulting science, and of apprehending such scientific truths as have life

in them, that they may thus find in those truths the "piece of money" requisite to satisfy the demands of the receivers of tribute; in other words, that they may find truth from a spiritual origin requisite to prove that the spiritual principle in man, as being from the God of heaven, is a free principle, but that the natural principle is born to serve. He, therefore, adds in conclusion, "That take, and give for Me and thee." It is, however, impossible for the careless and thoughtless reader to comprehend the above explanation of this interesting miracle, neither is it to be expected that the serious and well-disposed Christian will acquiesce and be perfectly satisfied with its reasonableness, unless he has previously weighed well in his mind the nature of Divine speech, so as to discern that, when God speaks, He annexes to His expressions ideas very different from those which man annexes to the same expressions. Thus, when God speaks, as in the above instance, of the sea, of a hook, of a fish, of a piece of money, and of giving this piece of money for Himself and His apostle, it is not to be supposed—because it is not reasonable to suppose—that by such language He designs to express the same sentiments which man would express by it, since God must of necessity annex to His language Divine and spiritual ideas, as man annexes to his language human and natural ideas. In order, then, to comprehend in any degree the language of the Almighty, it is necessary that the mind of the hearer or reader become spiritual; in other words, become open to the perception of spiritual and eternal realities, as they are contained in and conveyed by natural and temporal images. Thus, and thus only, can it be expected that the mystery of the above miracle will become intelligible, and that the true ground and reason will be discovered why the Incarnate God was pleased to send His apostle Peter to the sea, and there to cast in a hook, and take up the fish that first came up, and to open its mouth; and when he had found therein a piece of money, to take and give it for them both.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. From the letter, or literal sense of this miracle, I learn the edifying lesson that the Blessed Jesus, when He sojourned here on earth, paid respect unto the laws and customs of civil society, insomuch that He wrought a miracle to satisfy the demands of those laws and customs, and thus gave an example to all His followers never to give offence on such occasions. But from the spirit, or spiritual sense of the same history, I receive additional instruction, and this on a point of the utmost importance to be well understood, viz., what principle in man is free, and what principle serves; and that the spiritual principle in man is of the former description, and the natural principle is of the latter. I am instructed, yet further, that when God speaks to man, He always annexes Divine and spiritual ideas to all His expressions, so that when He applies, as in the case of this miracle, the natural terms, sea, a hook, a fish, a piece of money, He applies them in a sense very different from that in which man applies them, because He uses them as natural images expressive of His own all-wise, instructive, and Divine sentiments. I am resolved, therefore, to attend well to the above interesting lessons of heavenly instruction—first, by distinguishing well in my own mind the two principles of freedom and of servitude, until I am led to exalt in myself what is spiritual above what is natural; in other words, to exalt a spiritual end, spiritual objects, and spiritual goods above natural ends, natural objects, and natural goods; and secondly, by fixing deep in my mind the edifying persuasion that all the words of God, though expressed according to natural language, must of necessity contain in them Divine ideas, and that, consequently, when He employs natural images, as the sea, a hook, a fish, a piece of money, &c. &c., He doth not mean to express by them the merely natural things which they suggest to the natural mind of man, but those spiritual and eternal realities which relate to Himself and to His everlasting kingdom. AMEN.

SIGHT RESTORED A SECOND TIME TO TWO BLIND MEN.

MATT. XX. 29—34.

“ And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David! And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David! And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.”

Q. You have already told me, in explaining the miracle recorded in chap. ix., v. 28—31, concerning two other blind men, what is to be understood by spiritual blindness, and by the recovery of spiritual sight. Can you now inform me in what particulars the present miracle differs from the former?

A. The difference between the two miracles appears to be grounded in the different kinds and degrees of intellectual blindness, and of the recovery of intellectual sight, figured and represented in each miracle. For, as there are different kinds and degrees of spiritual good and spiritual evil, and as those kinds and degrees have reference in general to good or to evil in the human will, and to good or to evil in the human understanding, in like manner, and for the same reason, there are different kinds and degrees of spiritual blindness, which is nothing else but spiritual ignorance and error, and also different kinds and degrees of restoration to spiritual sight, which is nothing else but deliverance from spiritual ignorance and error. Accordingly, there is a blindness originating in the understanding, in consequence of false principles and

persuasions which have been imbibed by education ; and there is also a blindness originating in the will, in consequence of hereditary and natural evil, indisposing man for the reception of heavenly truth, and thus for the restoration of spiritual sight. Suffice it, then, to observe, that it appears not improbable that the two blind men recorded in the former miracle were intended to figure and represent the blindness of the Jewish church, so far as it originated in the understanding, and in the false principles and persuasions inseeded therein by education ; whereas the two blind men, in the present instance, were intended to figure and represent the blindness of the same church, as originating in the will, through the prevalence of hereditary and actual evil. And that all this is not improbable will appear from considering the peculiar circumstances attending each miracle ; as first, that the two blind men in the former miracle addressed the Blessed Jesus only as “the Son of David,” whereas in the present miracle they address Him as “the Lord, the Son of David ;” secondly, that in the former miracle Jesus saith to the blind men, “Believe ye that I am able to do this ?” whereas in the present miracle, He saith, “What will ye that I should do unto you ?” It deserves also to be remarked, that in the former miracle the two blind men are described as “following” Jesus, whereas in the present miracle they are described as “sitting by the way-side.” From these distinct circumstances, then, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the former miracle had more relation to blindness originating in the understanding, and the present miracle more to blindness originating in the will. For when the Blessed Jesus is called Lord, it is always in reference to the Divine good of His Divine love, and of course has more relation to the will than to the understanding ; and when He asks in one case, “Believe ye that I am able to do this ?” and in the other case, “What will ye that I should do unto you ?” it is evident that, in the former instance, He addresses Himself to the understanding, and in the latter to the will. The same remark will

apply to the two expressions, "following Jesus," and "sitting by the wayside," because the term "sitting" is uniformly applied in the Sacred Scriptures to a state of the will, or love, and the term "following" (or walking after) to the understanding or thought.

Q. Do you conceive, then, that the sight restored in the one instance differed from the sight restored in the other instance?

A. Yes; it is reasonable to suppose that there are different degrees of spiritual sight as well as of spiritual blindness; and that the differences in each case depend on the principle in which the blindness or the sight originates, whether it be the principle of the will or of the understanding. For if the sight originates merely in the understanding, and the will or love hath no part in it, it is then formed merely from the light of truth, and of course sees and judges of things only from that light, and thus becomes the sight which may properly be called conscience, or the sight of what is right and true; whereas if the sight originates in the will or love, it is then formed, not only from the light of truth, but from the relish of what is good, in which case it becomes a sight of another and of a higher order, which may be called perception, consisting, not only in the knowledge of what is right and true, but in the love and ardent desire of conjunction of life with the Supreme Good. These two distinct kinds of sight may be illustrated by their application to the spiritual view which every man has in his mind of the Divine Being. As for example, he who regards the Divine Being merely from the light of truth in his understanding, regards Him, and cannot help regarding Him, either as a severe Judge or as a powerful King, or as what is called by the Psalmist, "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;" whereas he who regards the Divine Being from the will or love, sees Him no longer as a severe Judge, or as a mighty King, &c. &c., but as a kind Friend, as a tender Father, as an affectionate Bridegroom and Husband. Thus, in the one case the Divine Being is viewed more as to His

external or apparent qualities and character ; for in the one case nothing is seen but His Divine wisdom, truth, power, &c. &c., whereas in the other case, the intellectual eye is opened to the more delightful and edifying perception of His essential mercy, love, compassion, and never-ceasing benevolence. And what is thus true in regard to the sight of the Divine Being, is true likewise in regard to the views which different men have of His Holy Word, and also of their fellow-men, since they who see from the understanding only, discern nothing in the Word of God but its truths, and nothing in their fellow-men but their intellectual talents ; whereas they whose eyes are open to see from the will or love, discover in the Word of God not only its truths, but its infinitely varied goods ; and in their fellow-men not only their intellectual talents, but those higher and more interior qualities of the heart which connect man with God, and qualify him for the enjoyment of eternal happiness. Perhaps, therefore, it is not an improper idea to suppose that the Almighty is ever in the act of restoring the blessing of spiritual sight to His “blind” children, because the sight, to which any of His children may have attained, howsoever clear and distinct it may appear, is but blindness when compared with that to which they may attain, and which their Heavenly Father is preparing for them.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you gather from this miracle ?

A. I am taught by this miracle, again, to adore that Omnipotence of the Incarnate God which was a second time manifested in the restoration of sight to the blind. I am instructed, also, by the same miracle, to distinguish all spiritual sight, or sight of the mind, into two kinds, viz., sight from the “understanding,” and sight from the “will,” and to see that the latter sight is beyond comparison more excellent, more extended, more perfect, and more blessed than the former. I am resolved, therefore, to apply to my God and Saviour, with all possible earnestness, for the invaluable blessing of

spiritual sight, that so I may no longer be blind to the view of what so infinitely concerns me to see, viz., God, His Word, His kingdom, and His peace. And since this spiritual sight is capable of indefinite improvement—especially when it is elevated and quickened by the will, or love—I am resolved, further, never to rest satisfied with mere intellectual sight—which is formed from the light of truth alone—but to pass forward to the attainment of that higher and more celestial sight which is derived from the love of God and of my neighbour, and by virtue of which I may be qualified to behold my God not only as He appears, but as He is ; and my neighbour not only as to His external form and character, but as to those internal qualities which make him “a child of God and an inheritor of His blessed kingdom.” Thus may I hope to find verified in myself what is said concerning the blind men of old, where it is written, “So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.” AMEN.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE CURSED.

MATT. xxi. 18—20.

“Now in the morning as He returned into the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away !”

Q. What do you here understand by the “morning,” by “returning into the city,” and by “hungering”?

A. By the “morning,” according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood the Lord’s advent, since as the natural sun rises in the natural morning, to dispense his blessings of heat and light to the natural world, which if deprived of those blessings must perish, in like manner in the spiritual morning the spiritual Sun, which is the Sun of righteousness, rises, to dispense also His blessings of spiritual heat and light to the inhabitants of that world who must otherwise perish in spiritual cold and darkness. It is therefore said, “as He returned into the city,” because by “He” is meant the Blessed Jesus, by “the city” the church, and by “returning into the city” His advent to the church, for the purpose of instructing, of reforming, of purifying, and of saving it. It is therefore added, “He hungered,” because by hunger, on this occasion, is not to be understood natural hunger only, but spiritual hunger, which, when predicated of the Blessed Jesus, denotes His ardent and Divine desire that His church, or people, may become receptive of all the good and blessing of His Divine mercy and love.

Q. And what do you understand further by the fig-tree which He saw in the way, and by His coming to it, and finding nothing thereon but leaves ?

A. According to the letter of the history, these words are to be understood literally, because they were literally true ; but according to the spiritual sense which is involved in this and in all other parts of the gospel history, they are to be understood spiritually ; and according to their spiritual interpretation, they add a weight of importance and of instruction to a circumstance which must otherwise appear too trifling to be recorded in the pages of the Eternal Truth.

Q. And in what do you conceive doth the importance and instruction of the above circumstance, according to its spiritual interpretation, consist ?

A. This question can only be answered by the consideration of what is properly signified by a fig-tree in the language of Revelation, and by the discovery that, like all other trees, it denotes some spiritual principle appertaining to the church, and specifically the principle of natural good, by which good is not to be understood the good into which man is born, or which he receives hereditarily from his parents, but the good received in the natural principle from a spiritual origin. Accordingly, we find frequent mention made in the Sacred Scriptures of the fig-tree, both singly and in connection with other trees, in all of which cases, agreeably to its spiritual interpretation, it figures and represents the good above adverted to. Thus it is written concerning the perverse church, "I will surely consume them, saith the Lord : there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf shall fade ;" (Jer. viii. 13.) again, "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness ; I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree ; at her first time ; (Hosea ix. 10.) again, "Fear not, O land ; be not afraid, ye beasts of the field : for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength ; (Joel ii. 21, 22.) again, "They shall sit every man under his

vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid ;” (Micah iv. 4.) in all which passages, and in many more which might be mentioned, by “fig-tree” is not signified fig-tree, but the natural good above spoken of, which it figures and represents. Hence, then, the fig-tree, in the present instance, as being without fruit, is representative of the Jewish church at that period, as being destitute of natural good ; and, therefore, by Jesus “seeing it” is spiritually signified Divine inspection into the state of the Jewish church as to that good ; and by His “coming to it, and finding nothing thereon but leaves only,” is further denoted Divine discovery that all truth was falsified in that church, for the leaves of a barren fig-tree are significative of such falsified truth.

Q. But it is written that “Jesus said unto it, Let no fruit henceforward grow on thee for ever.” How do you understand these words ?

A. By “Jesus saying to it,” is to be understood Divine judication concerning the church in which was no natural good, and nothing but truth falsified ; and by His saying, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever,” is further to be understood that the Jewish nation, which is here described by the fig-tree, as being destitute of natural good, would always remain so, and therefore, would for ever continue in the same disposition to falsify truth, which prevailed in them at that time.

Q. And what do you conceive to be meant by the concluding words, where it is written, “And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away” ?

A. According to the letter, or literal sense of the history, by the fig-tree withering away, is to be understood its being deprived of life, and, consequently, of all power of growth and fruitfulness ; but according to the spiritual sense, by the fig-tree withering away is representatively described the future state of the Jewish nation, as being deprived for ever of spiritual life, or of the power of spiritual growth and fruitfulness ; and by the disciples marvelling on this occasion, is further to be understood

their astonishment at the thought that any nation could be so extremely wicked and foolish as to deprive themselves of the capacity of receiving and bringing forth the fruit of the Eternal Truth, and of thus connecting themselves with the Supreme Good, and with all the happiness of His everlasting kingdom. The same thing is equally marvellous at this day, and must, therefore, excite the astonishment of all true disciples ; and yet it cannot be denied that if selfish and worldly love are suffered to take possession of men's minds, and thus to prevent the insemination and growth of revealed truth, they then become like the Jewish nation of old, and are awfully figured by the barren fig-tree in the above history, which withered away under Divine inspection and judication.

Q. But it is written in the gospel according to St. Mark, (chap. xi. 13.) in recording this miracle, that "the time of figs was not yet." Was it not, then, unreasonable to expect to find fruit on a tree before the season was arrived for bearing fruit ?

A. According to the literal sense of this history, there is such an appearance of unreasonableness as you hint at, and this is a proof how necessary it is, in many cases, to reconcile the sense of the letter by the spiritual sense which is involved in it, and for the sake of which the letter was given. For all this appearance of unreasonableness vanishes as soon as ever the history is interpreted according to its internal spiritual signification, by viewing it not as the history merely of a fig-tree which was without fruit, but as the history of a people destitute of spiritual life. For if it be regarded merely as the history of a fig-tree, all that Jesus Christ said and did on the occasion will appear as the result of bodily hunger only, and of indignation at not being able to gratify it, and thus, when he cursed the tree, it will be difficult to acquit Him of the charge of something worse than unreasonableness, especially when it is considered that the season of the year, rather than any fault in the fig-tree, rendered His expectations vain. But if the history be regarded as a figurative history, describing, under the emblem of a barren tree, a lifeless people, dead in trespasses, and sins, the whole

then will be found reconcileable to every idea both of justice and of reason, and even the declaration that "the time of figs was not yet," will then no longer be urged as an objection to the credibility of the history. For when it is said that "the time of figs was not yet," the words are to be interpreted according to their spiritual meaning, like those of the other parts of the history, and agreeably to such interpretation, they mean only that the church was not yet commenced, the fig-tree being a figure of such commencement, according to what is said in the "parable of the fig-tree." (Matt. xxiv. 32, 33.) Thus it is evident how necessary it is to explore the internal spiritual sense of the Lord's words, in order to reconcile the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions of the letter.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle of the barren fig-tree?

A. I learn, from the letter of this miracle, to adore that Divine power and operation which communicates life even to vegetable nature, and suspends and removes that life at pleasure. And from the spiritual sense of this history, I learn a further lesson of edifying wisdom, by which I am taught that Jesus Christ, under external figures, both of animals and of plants, describes spiritual principles relating to Himself, His church, and kingdom.

I am instructed yet further, by the above interesting history, to reflect on the awful situation of a people destitute of all natural good, and having no show of religion but the mere "leaves" of speculative opinions and doctrinal tenets, whilst they are totally "withered away" as to all the life and fruit of heavenly love and charity. I am resolved, therefore, to profit by this awful example, and for this purpose to take heed to myself, that when my "Lord cometh and seeketh fruit," He may find in me something more than "leaves." Thus may I hope never to have the terrible sentence pronounced against me, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," but rather to hear the blessed promise, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." (Psalm i. 3.) AMEN.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

LUKE v. 4—11.

“Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.

Q. WHAT do you here understand by Jesus saying to Simon, “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, the injunction of Jesus to Simon, on this occasion, relates to the catching of fish, and to the extraordinary success which would attend his obedience to the Divine command. But according to the spiritual sense involved in every particular of this history, the above words have relation to another sort of fishers, viz., to that of which the prophet speaks, where he writes, “Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them. (Jer. xvi. 16.) This “spiritual fishing” is also expressly spoken

of in the history under consideration, where it is written, that "Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." According, then, to the spiritual sense of this history, the above words relate to the methods most expedient for the catching of men; in other words, for instructing them in evangelical truths, and thus enclosing them in that spiritual net mentioned in the parable, and of which it is said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." (Matt. xiii. 47.)

Q. And in agreement with this spiritual idea of fishing and of a net, what do you conceive to be meant by the Divine command, to "launch out into the deep, and to let down the nets for a draught?"

A. By the deep is here spiritually to be understood the abyss of the natural and sensual affections and thoughts of mankind, and thus all who are under the influence of such affections and thoughts; and by launching out into the deep, and letting down the nets for a draught, is further to be understood application to persons of such a character, together with such an accommodation of heavenly truths to their capacity of apprehension, that they may be persuaded to believe, and may thus be introduced into the Christian church.

Q. But it is written that "Simon answering said, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." What do you understand by these words?

A. According to their spiritual meaning, these words teach a lesson of weighty instruction to all those who, like Simon, are called to the high office of catching men; for they teach that whilst man toils in the night of his own self-will and self-love, unenlightened by Divine wisdom, and unsupported by Divine power, his labour is vain, and he takes nothing; but no sooner doth he renounce his own will and wisdom, to place himself under the guidance and government of revealed truth, and its God, than he also, like the fisherman in the history, is successful in his labours, so as to enclose a great multitude

of fishes; in other words, to introduce a great multitude of men to the knowledge and love of the Incarnate God, and His Holy Word.

Q. You are perfectly right in your interpretation, but how will you reconcile it with what next follows, where it is written, that "their net brake?"

A. By the net breaking, according to the spiritual idea of a net, as above explained, is to be understood a want of coherence in the truths or doctrines of which the spiritual net is composed. For when man first commences a spiritual fisher, by endeavouring to instruct others in the great truths of the Gospel, he generally begins to teach from his understanding enlightened and enriched with heavenly knowledge, more than from his will, or from the influence of heavenly love and charity, in which case the net always breaks, because nothing gives to truth its proper consistence and coherence, but the good of heavenly love and life from which it is derived. Accordingly Jesus Christ, on another occasion, requires His disciples to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," (John xxi 6.) because, as was observed in the explanation of a former miracle, by the right side, when distinguished from the left, is represented and signified the above principle of heavenly good of love and charity. The necessity and benefit of this principle is also proved from what immediately follows, where it is written that "they beckoned to their partners who were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."

Q. How do these words prove the necessity and the benefit of the principle of love and charity, to make the spiritual fisher, or to enable Him to teach spiritual truths to advantage?

A. By the partners, here spoken of, which were in the other ship, are meant James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as appears from ver. 10 of this chapter, and by James and John, as was shown in treating of the miracle of the transfiguration, are figured and represented charity

and the works of charity, and, therefore, by beckoning to them for their assistance, is to be understood supplication for the aid of those heavenly principles, that so the understanding might no longer operate under the influence of mere speculative doctrines, but might submit itself to the guidance and government of the Supreme Good, and thus of the Divine Father of all good. For such is the case in regard to the great work of regeneration, whether it relate to the church in general, or to an individual member of the church in particular, that it must commence with instruction, which is a kind of spiritual fishing, since without instruction there can be no regeneration. But all instruction, at its commencement, is in the way of truth or knowledge imparted to the understanding, nor at that period is the necessity seen of consulting the higher principles of heaven-born love and charity, by seeking their co-operation. This necessity, however, is soon discovered by the breaking of the net, which is a certain consequence of the separation of truth and its doctrine from their parent good; for when this is the case, truth and its doctrine must of course want coherence and consistency. At this period, then, it is that an inversion of the state takes place, so that speculative knowledge is no longer allowed to have the pre-eminence, but is compelled to submit itself to the guidance and government of higher principles, which are in nearer connexion with God and His kingdom.

Q. But it is said on this occasion, that “both the ships, when they were thus filled, began to sink.” How do you reconcile the sinking of the ships with what you have been saying concerning heavenly love and charity, which might have been expected to preserve both the ships and those who were in them from such a calamity?

A. We have here an additional proof of the Divine wisdom contained under the letter of the Sacred Scriptures, and of the necessity of exploring that wisdom in order to rescue the Sacred Volume from the charge of being, in some instances, trifling and insignificant. For separate from its internal spiritual meaning, what can be the

importance of the information here given, that both the ships began to sink? It is necessary, then, to consider, and to consider attentively, what is here to be understood by a ship beginning to sink, and why a circumstance so apparently trivial should be thought worthy to be recorded in the book of Revelation. For from such consideration, aided by the light of the Eternal Truth, we shall be enabled to discover, that by the two ships here spoken of, which were filled with fishes, is figuratively described the Lord's new church, as to the knowledges of good and of truth, at that time about to be established, and that by their beginning to sink is figuratively and forcibly represented the effect of evil in that church, which at the time was not subdued and removed. For all evil, it is well known, is in its proper nature heavy, and inclined to sink, because it has always a tendency to decline downwards from God, by immersing itself in the unclean and earthly loves of self and of the world. The effect, therefore, of this evil is here recorded, in order to teach the salutary lesson that it is not sufficient for the church and its members to be instructed in heavenly knowledge, and to join to that instruction heavenly inclinations, unless they go on to apply that knowledge and their good desires to the removal of evil, by searching out and combating all the concupiscences of selfish and worldly love. For until this evil be removed, the ship must sink; but no sooner is that dead weight separated from the sinking vessel than it presently rises again above all the waves of trial and of danger, and pursues its steady and secure course to the haven of peace. There are, therefore, three things more especially necessary for man's salvation—first, Instruction, which is here signified by letting down the net for a draught; secondly, Charity, or the affection of good, resulting from instruction, and here figured by beckoning to their partners, who were in the other ship, to come and help them; and, thirdly, the application of both to the discovery and removal of evil, which evil is here represented by the ships beginning to sink.

Q. How, then, do you understand the words which follow, where it is written—"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"?

A. These words confirm the idea above suggested concerning the manifestation of evil as an effect resulting from instruction in truth, and from the reception of the affection of good which the truth inspires. For the words are evidently words of deep humiliation, under a feeling sense of disorderly and evil propensities, which had not before been discovered, on which occasion it is remarkable that Peter saith to his Lord—"Depart from me." For such is the effect of the first manifestation of evil in the penitent bosom, that it causes pain, which pain is supposed to result, not so much from the evil manifested as from the heavenly light by which it is manifested, and therefore the sinner is led to supplicate at the time the removal of that light until he is further instructed that his own corrupt propensities, and not the light, are the cause of his suffering. Thus, the history of Simon Peter, in this instance, is a history of the church, in all ages and places, whether amongst nations or individuals, describing its commencement, its progress, and its maturity—its commencement, by instruction in the knowledge of heavenly truth; its progress, by the conjunction of truth with its good; and its maturity, by leading to deep humiliation before Jesus Christ, resulting from a sense of hereditary and actual evil.

Q. But it is written that "Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men." How do you understand these words?

A. According to the spiritual idea of this miracle, as above unfolded, by Jesus saying unto Simon, "Fear not," is to be understood the communication of Divine strength and confidence suggesting the consolatory persuasion that man hath nothing to fear from evil whenever it is made manifest, and is regarded according to its proper nature as contrary to God and His righteousness, since evil is only to be dreaded when it conceals

itself, and is not seen in its proper colours of malignity and mischief. It therefore follows, in the way of consolation, “from henceforth thou shalt catch men,” for to “catch men,” according to the spiritual idea, is to attain to wisdom and intelligence, as is always the case whensoever the natural evils of selfish and worldly love are seen and removed under the influence of heavenly truth and heavenly good. Agreeably, then, to the spiritual idea, there are two kinds of “fishing” proper to the church in general, and to every individual of the church in particular, viz., first, the apprehension of truth in the way of science or knowledge, both in the memory and understanding; and secondly, the apprehension of truth as a principle of life in the will or love, leading to the discovery and rejection of all evil, because it is contrary to God, and leading further to the love and practice of all that is wise and good, because it is pleasing to God, and conducts to eternal conjunction with Him. The former apprehension of truth is distinguished by “catching fish,” and the latter by “catching men.”

Q. And what instruction do you learn from the concluding words of this miracle, where it is said that “when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him”?

A. According to the literal sense of these words, they teach the edifying lesson, that when Simon Peter and his partners James and John brought their ships to land, they forsook both their ships, and all their other property, that they might become the companions of the Blessed Jesus. But according to the spiritual sense, the above words teach a lesson still more edifying, viz., that they who are represented by Peter, by James, and by John—in other words, they who are principled in faith, in charity, and in works of charity—when they have brought their ships to land, or, what amounts to the same, when they are advanced from a state of truth to the good of truth, submit their will and their wisdom entirely to the guidance and control of the Divine will and wisdom of Jesus Christ, and thus follow Him in

the regeneration until they become His purified children, and meet for introduction into His heavenly kingdom. For by forsaking all is not to be understood the alienation of worldly property, such as houses, lands, and riches, but the renunciation of mental possessions, such as the faculties of loving, of understanding, of judging, &c.; and by following Jesus is not to be understood association with Him merely as to person, but conjunction as to mind, consisting in the humble and grateful acknowledgment that all the above faculties are from Him, and are therefore His ; thus that they ought to be submitted continually to His holy government and guidance.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle ?

A. From its literal history, I am again taught to adore that Omnipotence of the Incarnate God which exercises a control even over the living creatures inhabiting the depths of the sea. But from the spiritual sense of that history, I am taught a lesson still more extended and edifying, because I am instructed that it is the will of Jesus Christ that all His children should become "spiritual fishers ;" in other words, that they should collect natural or scientific truths as the means of accommodating spiritual truths to the apprehension of the natural or scientific man. I learn, further, that in this descent into natural knowledge or science, there is a danger lest the net should break, or what amounts to the same, lest truth should lose its consistence and coherence by being separated from the higher principles of heavenly love and life, and that, therefore, it is necessary to consult with and exalt those principles on the occasion. I am instructed yet further, that notwithstanding all attainments in knowledge, and in the heavenly affections to which it conducts, the ship will still sink, unless that knowledge and those affections be applied to the discovery and removal of the natural evils of self-love and the love of the world. Lastly, I learn, that when natural evils are thus made manifest and subdued, "the ship is then brought to land," on which

occasion the true disciples, or they who are principled in faith, in charity, and in the works of charity, "forsake all and follow Jesus;" in other words, renounce their own natural will and wisdom, that at all times they may consult and obey the will and wisdom of their Heavenly Father. I am resolved, therefore, to attend well to the above Divine instruction, by applying myself to the attainment of scientific truth, and by taking good heed lest in this application I should at any time separate truth from its good, or knowledge from the life of knowledge, and lest thus my net should break. I am resolved, further, to apply both truth and its good to the exploration and rejection of all my natural evils of selfish and worldly love, that so my ship may be prevented from sinking, and being brought safe to land, I may arrive at the high honour and happiness of imitating the disciples of old, by "forsaking all and following Jesus." AMEN.

THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED.

LUKE vii. 12—16.

“Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people.”

Q. What do you here understand by this “dead man who was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow?”

A. According to the letter of the history, by the “dead man,” here recorded, is to be understood the dead body of a man, and by his being “the only son of his mother, who was a widow,” is further to be understood what is literally expressed in those words. But, by this dead man, according to the spiritual sense involved in this and in all other miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, is to be understood a dead principle in the church, which principle is here called “the only son of his mother, who was a widow,” and, therefore, denotes the principle of faith or truth, this being the first-born of the church, which church is here called “mother,” as giving birth, through Divine operation, to all heavenly principles; and “widow,” as being deprived of the principle of truth, and yet in the desire of conjunction with it.

Q. How do you prove that the terms "mother" and "widow" have relation to the church?

A. That the term "mother" has relation to the church, is evident from the following passages in the Sacred Scriptures, as in Isaiah, "Where is the bill [or book] of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away?" (chap. l. 1.) and in Jeremiah, "Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed;" (chap. l. 12.) and in Ezekiel, "Thou art thy mother's daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children;" (chap. xvi. 45.) and in Luke, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it;" (chap. viii. 21.) and that the term widow has also relation to the church, which is in the affection of good, but in the defect of truth, is evident from the following passages, as in the Psalms, "A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows;" (lxviii. 5.) and in Isaiah, "Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;" (i. 17.) and in Luke, "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel, in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow;" (chap. iv. 25, 26.) not to mention many other passages, where widow is mentioned with the fatherless and the sojourner, because by "widow" are meant those who are principled in good, yet without truth; and by the "fatherless," those who are principled in truth without good; and by the "sojourner," those who want instruction both in good and truth.

Q. But it is written that "when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." How do you understand those words?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words relate to the Blessed Jesus, and to the distressed mother whose history is here recorded; but according to their spiritual sense, they relate to the Blessed Jesus and to the church, of which this distressed mother was a representative figure, and to the resurrection of the principle

of truth in that church, from death to life. According, therefore, to this latter sense of the words, by "the Lord seeing her" is denoted Divine inspection into the state of that church, thus a communication of Divine wisdom; and by His "having compassion on her" is denoted Divine mercy, and a communication of that mercy; and by His "saying to her, Weep not," is further denoted the application of Divine wisdom and mercy, for the removal of what caused trouble, viz., the removal of dead intelligence by the resurrection of living knowledge and truth in its place.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is written, that "He came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still; and He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise"?

A. By Jesus "coming," is to be understood Divine presence with love; and by His "touching the bier," is to be understood, further, the communication of the Divine truth with those external and natural persuasions, which contained in them lifeless or dead truths; and by "those who bare him standing still," is denoted a check given to the influence and operation of those natural and external persuasions; and by Jesus saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," is lastly denoted the Divine word and will of the Almighty, that the intelligence of truth should be restored to the church, by rescuing it from its connexion with unclean and earthly loves, and elevating it to conjunction with pure and heavenly loves.

Q. But it is added, that "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and He delivered him to his mother." How do you understand these words?

A. These words declare the effect of the Divine Omnipotent words of Jesus Christ, both in their literal and spiritual meaning; in their literal meaning, by announcing the resurrection of a dead man to life; and in their spiritual meaning, by announcing the resurrection of the intelligence of truth in the church out of the evils in which it was dead, to a participation of the life of love and charity. According, therefore, to this latter

sense, by the dead man "sitting up," is to be understood the resurrection of the above intelligence in the will or love, to which principle the term sitting has continual reference, whensoever it occurs in the Sacred Scriptures; and by his "beginning to speak," is further to be understood its resurrection in the understanding, to which principle the term "speaking" has reference, whensoever it also occurs in the holy records. It is added, "And He (Jesus) delivered him to his mother," to teach the edifying lesson, that the intelligence of truth is a heavenly gift from the Almighty to His church, especially when it is raised out of the death of unclean and earthly loves, and elevated to life by conjunction with pure and heavenly loves.

Q. And what instruction do you derive from the concluding words of this miracle, where it is said, "And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited His people"?

A. By the "fear," here spoken of, is meant a holy awe and adoration, resulting from beholding the effect of the Divine Omnipotence; and it is called a "great" fear, to denote the effect produced in the will, or love; and by "glorifying God," is further to be understood the effect produced in the understanding, or thought, leading to the devout acknowledgment that the resurrection from the dead, as above recorded, both in its natural and in its spiritual sense, was the result solely of the Divine power and operation of the Most High. It is, therefore, added, that "a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited His people," because by "a great prophet" is meant Jesus Christ as to His Humanity, or as to the truth which He taught; and by "God" is to be understood His Divinity, thus the Divine origin of that truth.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle?

A. From its literal sense and meaning, I learn, again, to adore the Omnipotence of my God and Saviour,

manifested in the resurrection of a dead man to life; and not only His Omnipotence, but His Divine mercy and compassion, displayed in His tenderness towards a suffering mother and widow. But from the spiritual sense of the history, I am taught a lesson still more edifying and instructive, being led by it to the sight and acknowledgment of the same Divine power exercised in the resurrection of truth in the church, from a state of death, whilst it is immersed in unclean loves, to a state of life, in its elevation to an eternal conjunction with its Divine origin in the spirit of love and charity. I am resolved, therefore, to profit by both the above views of the operation of the Divine Omnipotence, and to believe that death, in every sense of the word, is under the absolute control of Divine agency. I am resolved, also, more especially to regard that agency as exercised in the interiors of my own mind, and particularly to supplicate its powerful aid, whensoever I perceive in myself the intelligence of truth attaching itself to any defiled affection, and thus in danger of dying to its true and proper life, the life of heavenly love and charity. Thus may I humbly hope, that in all such spiritual death, the Blessed Jesus will come and "touch the bier," and say, as He said of old, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;" and thus, too, may I further hope that His blessed word will be accomplished, and that the intelligence of truth will be raised out of every principle of death and defilement, to an eternal conjunction with Him, His life and purity. AMEN.

THE WOMAN WHO HAD A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY.

LUKE xiii. 11—17.

“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “a woman which had a spirit of infirmity”?

A. According to the literal sense of the history, by the “woman,” here recorded, is meant a woman possessed with an evil spirit, by reason of which possession her body was bowed down, and unable to raise itself; but according to the spiritual sense of the history, the miracle performed on this woman involves in it a meaning, which respects the Lord’s church and kingdom, like all the other miracles which have been already explained. Agreeably, then, to such spiritual interpretation, by the woman, here spoken of, is represented the church as to the affection of truth, for it is the affection of truth which is a principal constituent of the church, and affection is always figured in the Sacred Scriptures by a woman, as

intelligence is by a man. When, therefore, it is said of this woman, that she “had a spirit of infirmity,” it denotes, according to the spiritual idea, that the affection of truth in the church was in disorder, in consequence of being under the influence of infernal disorderly spirits ; and when it is added “eighteen years,” it is to denote the full state of trial and suffering which had been endured on this occasion ; for by “years” are signified not the periods of temporal duration only, but states of spiritual life, whether troublous or peaceable ; and by the number “eighteen” is denoted a fulness of trial and suffering, because it results from the multiplication of the two numbers “three” and “six” into each other, and by the number “three” is spiritually denoted what is full and complete ; and by the number “six” a state of trial and temptation, agreeably to what was observed concerning that number in the explanation of the miracle of the transfiguration.

Q. But it is added concerning the above woman, that “she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” How do you understand these words ?

A. According to their literal sense, the words relate to the “bowing” or bending of the woman’s body, in consequence of her infirmity or inability to lift up herself ; but according to the spiritual sense, in which the words have reference to the church, by the woman being “bowed together” is to be understood that the affection of truth declined downwards, by being disposed to favour earthly loves, in consequence of which declination the principles of spiritual and natural life were confounded together and commixed, so that they could not be distinguished from each other ; and by her “not being able to lift up herself,” is further to be understood, that by reason of such declination the affection of truth was incapable of elevating itself to an eternal end, that is to say, to God, His Holy Word and kingdom. The history, therefore, here recorded, in its internal sense, has relation to that state both of the church, and of the individuals who compose it, in which the affection of truth, through the

influence of disorderly spirits, is warped from its proper tendency upwards, by which it is designed to exalt God, His Word and kingdom; and at the same time is bent downwards towards selfish and worldly love by such an impulse as to be incapable of elevating itself to conjunction with that Divine Being whose child it is, and for whose glory it is communicated.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is written, "And when Jesus saw her, He called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thy infirmity"?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words relate to the miraculous cure of a bodily infirmity, through the word of the Great Redeemer; but agreeably to the spiritual idea above suggested, they relate to the cure of a spiritual disorder by the same Divine Word. According, therefore, to this spiritual idea, by Jesus seeing her (the woman), is to be understood His Divine inspection into the state of the church immersed in earthly and unclean loves, and, therefore, figuratively described by the above woman, who was "bowed down, and not able to lift up herself;" and by His calling and saying unto her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity," is further to be understood the energy and application of His Divine love and wisdom for the removal of the spiritual disorders which He discovered, "calling" having relation to the exercise of His love, and "saying," to the exercise of His wisdom. It is added in the English translation of this passage, that He "called her unto Him," but these three last expressions do not occur in the original, in which it is only written that He "called and said," agreeably to a mode of expression common in the Sacred Writings, where two terms are frequently applied which appear to signify the same thing, when yet one has reference more to the principle of love in the will, and the other more to the principle of truth in the understanding, it being of the utmost importance to point out the interesting and edifying conjunction of those two principles.

Q. But it is added, that “He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.” What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. By “Jesus laying His hands on her,” according to the literal sense of the history, is to be understood the application of his bodily hands to the infirmity of a distressed woman; but according to the spiritual sense, by “laying His hands on her,” is figured and represented the operation of the Omnipotence of His Divine Humanity in liberating the church from connexion with the powers of darkness, and, at the same time, from those earthly affections, which “bowed her down” to the love of temporal things, and prevented her elevation to eternal objects. It, therefore, follows, that “immediately she was made straight, and glorified God,” because by being “made straight,” or, as it might be otherwise expressed, being “made erect,” is spiritually meant the elevation of the will, or love to an eternal end, thus to God, His Word and kingdom; and by “glorifying God” is to be further understood the devout acknowledgment that this elevation was owing solely to a Divine power, thus to the Omnipotence of the Divine Humanity of the Blessed Jesus.

Q. It is written that in consequence of this miracle, “the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. The Lord then answered Him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?” What further instruction do you derive from this part of the history?

A. From the circumstance of its being the Sabbath-day, when the Blessed Jesus wrought this and other miracles, I am led to reflect on the reason of the preference which He gave to that day above others, for the

manifestation of His Omnipotence, and by such reflection I am led, further, to the interesting discovery, that He selected that day for the performance of His mighty works on account of its most holy representation, as being figurative of the Divine and heavenly marriage of good and truth, thus of the union of the Divine and human natures in Himself, of His conjunction thereby with heaven and the church, and lastly, of the conjunction of charity and faith in man. For the mighty works which He performed consisted in general in the removal of bodily distemper and infirmity, by which distemper and infirmity was figured some perversion or other of the principles of good and of truth in the church, thus some breach of the heavenly marriage above spoken of, as represented by the Sabbath-day. This day, therefore, was selected above the rest by reason of its holy representation, and as involving in it that state of purity and peace the restoration of which He had principally in view in all the miracles which He performed. Here, then, may be seen the true ground and reason of the "indignation" expressed on this occasion by the ruler of the synagogue. For this ruler, who is afterwards called by the Lord "a hypocrite," was himself a subject of that very perversion of good and truth, which the Blessed Jesus came to remove, and the removal of which was represented by the Sabbath-day, and, therefore, it was impossible for him to discover the reasonableness of the Lord's conduct in this instance. We may perceive at the same time the full force and meaning of the Lord's remonstrance on the occasion, when He saith, "Doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall," &c. &c., for by this remonstrance, and the significant images which it contains, He meant to teach again the instructive lesson that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day;" in other words, that the Sabbath-day, as being representative of the eternal conjunction of heavenly good and truth, is the fittest of all days for restoring every principle of the life of man to its proper liberty, for the healing of every infirmity, for instruction in the knowledge of natural

good and truth, signified by "loosing the ox and the ass for watering," and especially for "breaking the bands of wickedness," by which the spiritual affection of good and truth, that true "daughter of Abraham" in the human mind, is tied and "bowed down," that it "cannot raise itself up" to the possession and enjoyment of God and His blessed kingdom.

Q. But it is written in the conclusion, that "when He had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." What do you learn from these words?

A. I learn to note and to adore the double effect of the Divine Word, as manifested in its operation on its adversaries, and on its friends; on its adversaries, by unveiling to view their evils and their errors, and thus making them ashamed; and on its friends, by discovering to them a mercy and an Omnipotence, or a goodness and truth ever near and at hand for the cure of all human infirmity, and thus increasing their joy. In this part of the history, therefore, I am enabled to discover the necessity of his Divine Word, to effect the salvation of mankind, since without it, there is no possibility either that evil or error can be detected, or that any good and truth of heaven can be imparted. Thus I am instructed, further, that the Word of God commences its salutary operations, first, by making man ashamed of himself and his corruptions, whilst he lives without God, and secondly, by filling him with all joy for all the glorious things done for him, when he becomes a convert to God, and a faithful receiver of His Holy Word.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. I learn, again, to adore the Omnipotence of the Great Saviour manifested in the cure of bodily infirmity, and in the removal of the evil spirit who caused it. At the same time, I am instructed in the exercise of the same Divine power for the cure of spiritual infirmity, and particularly of that spiritual depression by which the human mind, in its captivity to the powers of darkness, is bowed

and bended downwards towards the lower things of time and sense, so as to be unable "to lift itself up" to the contemplation and enjoyment of eternal objects. I learn, further, to discover the reason why the Blessed Jesus dispensed his healing operation so frequently on the Sabbath-day, and thus to discern a connexion between that day, according to its representative meaning, and the cure of all spiritual diseases. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth to apply to this Great Saviour whensoever I feel my affections declining downwards towards the lower concerns of time and sense, that so I may never be "bowed down" by the "spirit of infirmity" in such a manner as to be unable "to lift up myself" to higher and more substantial objects. I am resolved, further, to cherish in my mind a devout sense of the sanctity of the Sabbath-day, by recollecting at all times its representative meaning, and how it is a perpetual standing figure here below, of the heavenly marriage, from which alone comes all true rest, peace, and deliverance from every spiritual disease and infirmity. I am resolved, also, frequently to read and meditate on the Word of God, until I become ashamed of all those evils and errors in myself, which are in opposition to its purities and its sanctities, and begin to feel a secret joy from the admission of all its heavenly goods and truths. Thus may I humbly hope to experience, like the distressed object in the above history, the power of that Divine Word, which said of old, "Woman, thou art loosed of thine infirmity;" and thus, too, shall I no longer be of the number of the adversaries of the Great Saviour, but rather rank in the number of those friends of whom it is written, "That they rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." AMEN.

THE DROPSY CURED.

LUKE xiv. 1—6.

“And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched Him. And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? And they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day? And they could not answer Him again to these things.”

Q. You have already told me, in the explanation of a former miracle, what is figured and represented by the “Sabbath-day,” and why, on account of that representation, the Blessed Jesus wrought so many of His miracles on that day. Can you now tell me what is here to be understood by “a certain man which had the dropsy”?

A. According to the letter of the history, by “a certain man who had a dropsy,” is meant one who was afflicted with a bodily distemper called by that name, and consisting in a superabundance of water formed in different parts of the body; but according to the spiritual sense contained in this, as in the other miracles which the Lord wrought, by “a certain man who had a dropsy” is figured the state of the Jewish church at that period, in its perversion of all heavenly good and truth, and particularly in this perversion, that natural knowledge had gained the ascendancy over spiritual, and that thus all spiritual life of love and charity was in danger of being destroyed by the superabundance of mere natural speculation and thought. For such is the correspondence between the natural distemper called the dropsy and the spiritual perversion of heavenly good and truth here

adverted to, all the difference between them consisting in this, that the natural distemper is occasioned by a superfluity of natural water, whereas the spiritual perversion hath its rise in a superfluity of what is signified and represented by water, viz., natural truth; in other words, truth apprehended naturally, and not spiritually. It is said of the above man who had the dropsy, that he was “before Him” (Jesus), denoting, according to the spiritual idea, that the above perversion of all heavenly good and truth in the Jewish church, at that period, was under Divine inspection, being both seen and noted by the Divine wisdom.

Q. But it is written on this occasion, that “Jesus answering, spake unto the Lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?” What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of the question here proposed by the Blessed Jesus to the Lawyers and Pharisees?

A. By this interesting question it would appear to be the Lord’s intention to call the Lawyers and Pharisees, and through them all succeeding generations of mankind, to the very important consideration of the Sabbath-day, both as to what it is in itself, as to what it figures and represents, and further as to the duties which it requires, that so it might be discovered, agreeably to what was shown in explaining a former miracle, that the Sabbath is in itself most holy, as being representative of the Divine and heavenly marriage of good and truth, and that, therefore, the duties which it requires are all such acts of mercy, of charity, of instruction, and of piety, &c. &c., as have a tendency to rescue man from the dominion of the powers of darkness, and from the influence of selfish and worldly love, that he may be at liberty to pursue and regain his lost life and happiness in the love and favour of His Heavenly Father.

Q. Can you see any reason, then, why the Blessed Jesus, without waiting for an answer to His question, immediately “took the man, and healed him, and let him go”?

A. It was not necessary for the Blessed Jesus to be determined by the opinions of men as to the propriety of His own conduct, and, therefore, without waiting to know the sentiments of the Lawyers and Pharisees on the occasion, He gives the best possible answer Himself to His own question, by manifesting His mercy and Omnipotence in the removal of bodily disease, proving thus that it “was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, because that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”

Q. And how do you understand the expressions by which this act of mercy and Omnipotence is described—“He took him and healed him, and let him go”?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these expressions are to be understood literally, as relating to the man who had a dropsy; but according to the spiritual sense, they are to be understood spiritually, as relating to the perversion of good and truth in the church, or to the spiritual dropsy occasioned by a superabundance of natural knowledge, and of proportionable defect of spiritual life; and agreeably to this latter sense, by taking him is to be understood the application of the Divine wisdom or truth, according to what was observed concerning this expression in the explication of the miracle of the loaves and fishes; and by healing him, is further to be understood the application of the Divine mercy or love, for all spiritual healing is from that source; and, lastly, by letting him go, is to be understood the effect produced in the disordered church by the two-fold application as above, in consequence of which the church was at once relieved from the perversion under which it had laboured, and was enabled freely, and of itself, to walk in the ways of righteousness, by keeping the commandments of God.

Q. But it follows, that when Jesus had thus taken and healed the sick man, and let him go, He then proposed another question, saying—“Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath-day?” What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of this second question?

A. This subject has been already discussed in treating of a former miracle in the preceding chapter, on which occasion a similar question was proposed in these words, "Doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?" The only difference, therefore, between the two questions is this, that in the former miracle the inquiry is concerning an ox and an ass to be loosed from the stall and taken to watering, whereas in the present miracle the inquiry is concerning an ass and an ox fallen into a pit. This difference, however, in the letter of the two questions makes no difference as to their spirit and design, since in both cases it is intended to prove the same thing, viz., that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day, whether this good be effected in the way of the instruction of the natural man, signified by loosing the ox or the ass from the stall, and leading him to the watering, or in the way of rescuing him from the influence of false persuasions, signified by pulling the ass or the ox out of the pit into which he was fallen. It here deserves to be noted, that in proposing the former question, the ox is mentioned before the ass, whereas in proposing the latter question the ass is set before the ox, and though it may not perhaps be easy to assign the true reason for this change of priority, and still less easy to comprehend it if it was assigned, yet we are compelled to acknowledge, that since all the words of the Blessed Jesus were the words of an Infinite Wisdom, there must be a reason, and an important one also, for the above circumstance, however trivial and fortuitous it may appear to those who are not accustomed to reflect that in the word, or speech, of the Great and Holy God every expression and mode of expression must of necessity partake of a Greatness and Holiness similar to that of the Divine Speaker.

Q. And how do you understand the concluding words in the history of this miracle, where it is written that "they could not answer Him again to these things" ?

A. From these words I learn, that the wisdom and the works of God carry with them a reasonableness and an

authority irresistible, and such as no wit or talent of thoughtless and wicked men can overthrow. Not that thoughtless and wicked men cannot oppose and endeavour to vilify both Divine wisdom and Divine works, for every day's experience proves that they can. It is only, therefore, meant to assert that both the words and the works of the Almighty are alike stable and permanent, and that "though the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, yet the counsel of the Lord endureth for ever," as experience again testifies, by proving that the book of Revelation, called "The Bible," notwithstanding all the assaults which it has endured either from the malice or the ridicule of the scoffer, still exists in the church "as a fountain of living waters," and will continue to exist there, in like manner as "it endureth for ever in heaven." (Psalm cxix. 89.)

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle?

A. From the letter or literal sense of this miracle, I am taught again to adore that Divine Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, which manifested itself so repeatedly in the cure of bodily distempers; and on the present occasion, in the removal of that terrible disease called the "dropsy." I am taught, also, to reflect that this disease in the human body is an exact figure of a far more dangerous one in the human mind, because it is a figure of a dreadful perversion of the good and truth of God's most Holy Word, in consequence of admitting it only into the understanding, and not into the will or love, in which case the mind labours under a superabundance of mere natural speculation, separate from the graces and virtues of heavenly life. I am instructed, yet further, by the history of this miracle, concerning the sanctity and true design of the Sabbath-day, as being representative of the Divine and heavenly marriage of love and wisdom in God, and of goodness and truth in heaven and in the church. I am resolved, therefore, to profit by all this blessed instruction, and for this purpose to meditate continually on that Divine and heavenly

marriage which the Sabbath-day was designed to call continually to my recollection. And since I myself, like all other men, am exposed to the danger of being afflicted by a "spiritual dropsy," I am further resolved to keep diligent watch over myself, lest at any time I should be more eager in acquiring knowledge than in forming my life according to it, or in speculating on the Word of God more than in practising its holy precepts. Yet should it come to pass, that through the frailty of my nature I should still contract the distemper which I dread, I will not still despair, but recollecting the blessed words, "He took and healed him, and let him go," I will hasten to my God and Saviour, to make me the happy subject of the same mercy. So may I hope to become, like the dropsical man in the above history, a monument of the loving-kindness and Omnipotence of my God; and being restored to spiritual health and strength, by a due and equal reception of the principles of spiritual life, I will sing with the holy one of old, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." (Psalm ciii. 2, 3, 4.) AMEN.

THE TEN LEPERS CLEANSED.

LUKE xvii. 12—19.

And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off; and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Q. You have already told me, in explaining a former miracle, (Matt. viii. 2) what is spiritually to be understood by a "leper," and how the disorder called the "leprosy" is a figure of the profanation of good and truth, by which profanation is meant the receding from those heavenly principles of life, when previously they have been admitted and cherished. Can you now tell me what is here to be understood by the "ten lepers," and by their "standing afar off"?

A. The lepers here are said to be "ten" to denote all in the church who were guilty of the above profanation, in like manner as the "ten virgins," to whom the kingdom of heaven is likened, (Matt. xxv. 1) denote all who are in the church, whether they be good or bad; and as the "ten horns of the scarlet beast," (Rev. xvii. 7, 12) denote the all of power in what was figured by the beast; and by their "standing afar off," is here signified humiliation of heart under a sense of their defilement

before the Divine Majesty, because it afterwards follows, that "they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." By "standing afar off," according to the spiritual idea, is meant in general, not distance of space, but disagreement in affection, since all distance in the spiritual world is determined solely by the agreement or disagreement of the affections of those who dwell there; but in the present instance it denotes humiliation and adoration of heart, arising from a sense of unworthiness, inasmuch as it follows that they made earnest supplication to their Saviour God.

Q. How does it appear that these ten lepers addressed the Blessed Jesus in such an earnest manner as their God?

A. Their earnestness is manifest from the expression, "they lifted up their voices," for to lift up the voice, according to the spiritual idea, denotes an elevation of affection and thought, consequently, earnestness in the pursuit of what they wanted; and that they acknowledged the Blessed Jesus as their God, is further evident both from their supplicating His mercy, and from the title which they here give Him, which in the original is "epistatos," and signifies "governor." *

Q. But it is written, that when He saw them, He said unto them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed." What do you understand by these words?

A. According to the letter of the history, they are to be understood literally, and were literally true; but

* In the original Greek of the evangelical history, there are four distinct terms, which in the English version are all alike rendered "Master," when applied to the Great Saviour. The first is *Didascalos*, which properly signifies "Teacher" or "Master of Letters;" the second is *Epistatos*, the term used in this miracle, which properly signifies a "Præfect" or "Governor;" the third is *Cathegetes*, which properly signifies a "Leader" or "Director in a Way;" the fourth is *Rabbi*, which properly signifies "Master." The first occurs in Matt. viii. 19, chap. ix. 12, chap. x. 24, 25, chap. xii. 38, chap. xvii. 24, chap. xxii. 16, chap. xxvi. 18, Mark v. 35, chap. x. 17, chap. xii. 12, Luke iii. 12, chap. vi. 40, chap. vii. 45, chap. viii. 49, chap. x. 25, John xi. 28, chap. xii. 13, 14. The second occurs, Luke viii. 24, chap. ix. 36, chap. xvii. 13. The third occurs, Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. The fourth occurs, Matt. xxvi. 49. It is to be noted, also, that a fifth term, viz., *Kurios*, which properly signifies "Lord," is sometimes rendered "Master," as in Matt. xv. 27, chap. xxvi. 25.

according to the spiritual sense involved in this and in all the other miracles wrought by the Lord, they are to be understood spiritually; and agreeably to their spiritual signification, by Jesus "seeing," is here to be understood Divine inspection into the state of profanation which then prevailed in the church; and by His saying to the lepers, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," is denoted Divine injunction respecting life, that it should always be kept open to communication with the Supreme Good, that is to say, with the good of heavenly love and charity, this good being represented by "the priests" in the Jewish or representative church, agreeably to what was shown in the explanation of a former miracle, (Matt. viii. 2 to 5.) where the same injunction is given; and "by their being cleansed as they went," is further to be understood that they were delivered from the evil of profanation, in consequence of living according to Divine order, and thus keeping their minds open to the influence and reception of heavenly love.

Q. And how do you understand what is afterwards written, that "one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan"?

A. From the literal sense of these words, I learn that one of the above lepers, under a sense of the mercy which he had received, returned to give thanks to his Divine Benefactor, acknowledging at the same time that He was both God and Man; for it is said, that "with a loud voice he glorified God," and then it is immediately added, that "he fell down at his (God's) feet," where by God's "feet" nothing can be meant but the lowest principle of His Humanity. And from the spiritual sense of the same words, I am further taught a lesson of the greatest importance to be well apprehended, viz., that they who are principled in the affection of truth, as was the case with this returning leper, are disposed to acknowledge the Blessed Jesus, or God in a Divine Humanity, as the sum and substance of all representatives in the

church, and to worship Him accordingly as the All in All, or the fulness and completion of every rite and ceremony, of every type and figure, by which, previous to His incarnation, He had been promised to the world in the book of Revelation. For by this leper "turning back," is evidently meant his turning back from going to show himself to the priests; in other words, his turning back from what was merely representative; and by his "glorifying God" on the occasion, and falling down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks, is as evidently declared, that from what was representative he turned Himself to what was represented, viz., to the Manifested Jehovah in His Divine Humanity, confessing Him, and Him alone, to be his deliverer from the evil of profanation, thus his restorer to all the purity, power, and blessedness of heavenly life, and consequently that Divine Person prefigured under every representative law, ordinance, and rite of the Jewish or representative church.

Q. You said by this returning leper are denoted those who are in the affection of truth. What proof can you give that this was the case?

A. I prove it from the circumstance of his being a Samaritan, for by "the Samaritans," in the representative church, were denoted those who were principled in that affection, which is further confirmed by what is said in the parable of "the good Samaritan," and also by the discourse which Jesus Christ held with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is written, that "Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger"?

A. These words prove that the sayings of the Blessed Jesus contain Infinite stores of wisdom, which no thought of angel or of man can fully conceive, and no tongue of angel or man is able to express. For when He asks the significant question, "Were there not ten cleansed?" it is the same thing as if He had said, "Are not all mankind

the subjects of my purifying influence?" Is there a human being who is not restrained from the perversion and profanation of heavenly good and truth, in one degree or other, by my power?" Again, when He asks the equally significant question, "Where are the nine?" it is the same thing as if He had again said, "Whence comes it to pass that my purifying power is not generally acknowledged? How is it that mankind do not perceive that they are indebted to Me daily for every good affection and thought, by which they are preserved from the perversion and profanation of truth? Why, then, do they not return to Me, to render thanks for My mercies, by expressing a grateful sense of the favours which they continually receive from Me?" Again, when He adds, "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger," it is the same thing as if He had said, "I am not acknowledged by those who have received My Word, and who ought to have been instructed by its representatives, that I am the thing represented, because I am the Divine Fountain of all life, and wisdom and purity; when yet they, who have not My Word, and have not been the subjects of its instruction, are disposed to acknowledge Me, by giving Me the glory which properly belongs to Me."

Q. But it is lastly written, that He said unto him, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." How do you understand these words?

A. According to the sense of the letter, the words relate to the discharge of the Samaritan leper, and to the declaration of the cause of his cure, as originating in his faith; but according to the spiritual sense of the words, they apply to those who are rescued by Divine mercy from the guilt of profanation, and contain a salutary counsel on the interesting occasion. For by "arising," in this case, is to be understood an elevation of the affections and thoughts to a closer and fuller conjunction with the Supreme Good and Supreme Truth, thus with the Incarnate God in His Divine Humanity; and by the additional injunction, "go thy way," is

further to be understood the requirement of Divine order, that they should form their lives in agreement with such elevation, that so the external man, with all his concerns, may be under the rule and government of heavenly love and wisdom in the internal man; and lastly, by the declaration, "thy faith hath made thee whole," is to be understood that the perversion and profanation of good and truth can only be removed by faith in and from the Incarnate God, thus by a faith not originating in man, but in Him who hath said, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from this miracle?

A. From the literal sense of this miracle, I learn again to adore that Omnipotence of the Great Saviour, by which He cured the terrible bodily disease called the "leprosy," in ten several cases at the same time, and this when the subjects of that disease were removed from His more immediate presence. And from the spiritual sense of the miracle, I am led again to reflect on that far more terrible mental disease, the profanation of good and of truth, of which the leprosy was a striking and awful figure. From the example, too, of the one leper, who "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God," and whose faith was afterwards commended by that God, I am further taught the instructive lesson, how I ought also to behave under similar circumstances, and on every occasion of receiving any spiritual blessing from the hand of my God. I learn, also, that all the representatives in the Jewish or representative church pointed at the Great Saviour, and were realized in His Divine person. From the Lord's significant question also, "Were there not ten cleansed?" I receive the additional instruction, that He extends to all mankind the healing virtue of His Divine presence and operation, for the purpose of preserving them from the great evil of profanation; and from His other equally significant question, "Where are the nine?" I am led to reflect on that awful state of inconsideration by which the generality of mankind are

blinded to a proper sense of the gratitude they owe to the Father of Mercies, and thus accept His favours, but without acknowledging the Divine bounty from which they flow. Again, when the Blessed Jesus adds, "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger," I am taught to see that the Gentiles, who do not possess the Word of Revelation, are better disposed in general to acknowledge the Incarnate God, and worship Him in His Divine Humanity, than they who do possess it, and who at the same time profane its truths and sanctities. Lastly, from the concluding injunction to the cleansed leper, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," I learn the important duty of elevating my affections and thoughts to my Saviour God under every reception of His mercy, and to form my whole life and conversation in agreement with such elevation, devoutly acknowledging the cure of all my spiritual disorders to proceed from his Divine favour, because it is the result of a faith which He alone inspires. I am resolved, therefore, to endeavour to profit by all the above instruction, and especially, in every spiritual purification, to imitate the example of the one in the above history, who, "when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell on his face at His feet." Thus may I hope, like this blessed leper, to gain the approbation of my God, and to hear from His Divine lips the edifying and consolatory words, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." AMEN.

THE WATER TURNED INTO WINE.

JOHN II. 1—11.

“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ; and the mother of Jesus was there : And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, they have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bare unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was : (but the servants which drew the wine knew) ; the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine ; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse : but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory ; and his disciples believed on him.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “a marriage in Cana of Galilee” ?

A. By “a marriage in Cana of Galilee,” according to the literal sense of the above history, is to be understood what is literally expressed ; but according to the spiritual sense, by the “marriage” here spoken of, is to be understood a “spiritual marriage,” which is such a marriage as that mentioned in the parable, and to which the kingdom of heaven is compared, where it is said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son.” (Matt. xxii. 2.) This marriage is the

marriage of goodness and truth, thus the marriage of the Lord with His church, and with every individual composing the church, and, therefore, whether we speak of the Lord's church, or of a "marriage," it is the same thing, since, as the conjunction of goodness and truth is truly and properly "a marriage," in like manner the same conjunction truly and properly constitutes what is called the church. When, therefore, it is said "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," the words spiritually relate to the establishment of the church among the Gentiles, for by "Cana of Galilee" is meant a Gentile city, agreeably to what is written in the prophet, where it is said, "By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations" [or "Gentiles"]. (Isaiah ix. 1.)

Q. But it is written concerning this marriage, that "the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage." How do you understand these words?

A. These words, like all other parts of this Divine history, have both a literal and a spiritual meaning, and according to their literal meaning they imply what they literally express; but according to their spiritual meaning, they involve in them an internal sense, which lies concealed within the letter, as the soul is concealed within its body. Agreeably, therefore, to this internal sense, by the mother of Jesus being there, or at the marriage, is to be understood that the affection of good was there, this affection being always dignified in the Sacred Scriptures by the venerable title of "mother," inasmuch as all things in the church are derived from that affection; again, when it is added, that "both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage," the words imply, that in this establishment of the church, conjunction was sought with the Divine Being through the Humanity which He assumed, and conjunction also with all the several orders of good and of truth derived from that Being, and represented by His disciples.

Q. And what do you understand by the words which follow, where it is written, that "when they wanted

wine, the mother of Jesus said unto Him, they have no wine" ?

A. These words, also, according to their literal sense, mean what is literally expressed, and have relation only to the material liquor called "wine;" but according to their spiritual sense, they have a deeper and more interior meaning, having relation to "spiritual wine," or to that wine of which Jesus Christ speaks in another place where He says, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles;" (Matt. ix. 17.) and again, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. xxvi. 29.) The wine, then, here adverted to and called "new wine," is nothing else than the interior spiritual sense of the Jewish law and ritual, opened by the Incarnate God; in other words, it is that interior apprehension of the Divine truth contained in the Sacred Scriptures, which Jesus Christ in another place calls "His blood," and also "the blood of the New Testament," as being distinct from that external apprehension of the same truth which before prevailed, and which He calls "old wine." That wine in the Sacred Scriptures is spoken of according to a spiritual signification, is evident from the following passages amongst many others, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red." (Psalm lxxv. 8.) And again, "Come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." (Isaiah lv. 1.) According, then, to this spiritual interpretation, by their wanting wine, or, as it might be more properly expressed, when the wine was finished, is to be understood that there was no longer any spiritual apprehension of truth in the church; and by the mother of Jesus saying to him, "They have no wine," is further to be understood that this was perceived by the affection of good in the church.

Q. But it follows, that "Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." What do you conceive to be the import and meaning of these words?

A. When the Blessed Jesus, on this occasion, applied

the term "woman" and not "mother," He designed to teach the instructive and important lesson, that He was no longer her son, but by nativity, as well as by conception, was the Son of God, thus was Jehovah manifest in the flesh. It is further to be understood, that in the process of His glorification, or of making His humanity Divine, He successively put off the infirm humanity which He received from the mother, and in the same degree put on a humanity from the Father, which He finally made a Divine Humanity. It is further observable, that in addressing His mother at the time of His crucifixion, He again calls her "woman," (John xix. 26.) to denote a second time that He was no longer her son.

Q. And what do you understand by the words applied on this occasion, "What have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."

A. The former part of these words is not expressed in agreement with the original Greek, which might be more properly rendered, "What (is it) to me and to thee?" Still, however, it is difficult to discover the precise purport of these words, as applied by the Blessed Jesus. Their most probable design appears to be this, that by an apparent refusal to attend to His mother's importunity, He might put her faith to a trial, in like manner as He afterwards put to trial the faith of His apostle Philip, by the question, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John vi. 5.) on which occasion it is added in the verse which follows, "And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do." In the present case, therefore, it is not improbable that He might intend to prove His mother, and, consequently, those represented by His mother, when yet He Himself knew what He would do. It is accordingly added, "mine hour is not yet come," because by His hour not being yet come, is to be understood that His humanity was not yet fully glorified, or made Divine, and thus that He was not yet in a state to confer on His church all that blessing which He came to confer, by opening the minds of men to an

interior or spiritual apprehension of the heavenly truths contained in His Holy Word.

Q. But it is written in the next verse, that "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do." How do you understand these words?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words contain an instruction from the mother of Jesus to the servants attendant at the marriage, to do whatsoever Jesus required them to do; but according to the spiritual sense above adverted to, they contain a dictate from the affection of good in the church to the lower principles of the natural mind, to submit themselves in all things to the order, authority, and precept of the Incarnate God. For the church, in general, may be regarded as an individual house or family, in which goodness and truth are as the husband and wife, whilst the affections of goodness and truth are the sons and daughters, and natural delights with their several sciences are the men-servants and maid-servants. The servants, therefore, here spoken of, are to be regarded according to this spiritual idea.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a piece"?

A. By the six water-pots of stone, set according to the purifying of the Jews, are spiritually to be understood those things in the Holy Word, and thence in the Jewish church and its worship, which were representative and significative of Divine things in the Lord and from the Lord, which contained internal things; on which account also they were "six" and of "stone," because the number "six" signifies all, and is predicated of truths; "stone" also signifies truth; and "the purifying of the Jews" signifies purification from sins, thus all things of the Jewish church; for the church regards purification from sins as all that belongs to it, since in proportion as any one is purified from sins, in the same proportion he is a church.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the purport of the next verse, where it is written, "Jesus saith unto them,

Fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim"?

A. According to the literal sense of this history, the above words mean what is literally expressed; but according to the spiritual sense, they have a deeper and more edifying meaning. For, according to the spiritual idea, by the "waterpots" here spoken of, are signified, as was above observed, all those things in the Word, and thence in the Jewish church and its worship, which were representative and significative of Divine things in the Lord and from the Lord. When the Lord then saith of these water-pots, "Fill them with water," it is to be understood, agreeably to the above spiritual interpretation, that it is the Divine will and intention that the representatives and significatives of the Jewish church should be regarded as the continents of all Divine and heavenly truths, and should thus be filled in the minds of all true believers with that living water, of which Jesus Christ speaks in another place, where He says, "Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." (John iv. 14.) And again, when it is added, that "they filled them up to the brim," it is to be understood that the will and intention of the Lord was fulfilled by a devout acknowledgment in the church, that all representatives and significatives in the Holy Word are full of His life, because they have relation to Him and to the things of His eternal kingdom.

Q. How, then, do you understand the words which follow, "And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast"?

A. According to the spiritual interpretation above given of this history, by the command, "Draw out now," is to be understood Divine requirement that instruction from the Word should be given agreeably to the idea above suggested of its spiritual contents; and by "bearing unto the governor of the feast," is further to be understood Divine requirement that this instruction shall be

imparted to all those who are principled in the knowledges of truth, all such being represented and signified by "the governor of the feast;" and lastly, by its being added, "they bare," is to be understood, that this requirement was fulfilled by those whose office it was to instruct.

Q. But it is written, further, that "when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and, when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." How do you understand these words?

A. By the "water" here said to be made "wine," is to be understood spiritually the truth of the external church, such as was the truth of the Jewish church, converted by Divine presence and agency into the truth of the internal church, such as is the truth of the Christian church; hence by the Lord making water wine is spiritually signified, that He made the truths of the external church truths of the internal church, by opening the internal things which lay concealed in them; and by "the ruler of the feast tasting this water made wine," is to be understood, that they who were principled in the knowledges of truth had a perception of this extraordinary change; and by "his not knowing whence it was, but the servants which drew the water knew," is further signified that the cause of this change in the apprehension of truth was not known to those who were in the knowledges of truth, but only to those who were instructors in truth; and lastly, by "his calling the bridegroom, and saying unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse, but thou hast kept the good wine until now," is to be understood that every church commences from truths derived from good, but closes in truths not of good, and that even now in the end of the church, truth derived from good, or genuine truth, is given, viz.,

from the Lord, who is the true bridegroom. For by "the beginning" is meant the commencement of a church; and by "good wine," the truths derived from good which are then taught in that church; and by "that which is worse," truth not originating in good, but received and taught under the influence of self-love and the love of the world, at the end of the church; and by "the good wine kept until now," the truths derived from good which will again be opened by the Lord for the establishment of a new church.

Q. And how do you understand the concluding words of this history, where it is written, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him"?

A. By "beginning" is here to be understood, not only precedency in regard to time, but also in regard to importance, and, therefore, it here implies, agreeably to the spiritual idea above-mentioned, that the conversion of water into wine, or what amounts to the same thing, a spiritual apprehension of the Word of God implanted in the place of a natural one, is the first and chief of miraculous agency; and by "manifesting forth His glory" on this occasion, is further to be understood the revelation of the internal spiritual sense of His most Holy Word, this sense constituting what is properly called "glory," as in the following passages, "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them;" (John xvii. 22.) and again, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me;" (v. 24.) and again, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" (John i. 14.) lastly, by "His disciples believing on Him," is to be understood their faith in His Sole and Supreme Divinity, as resulting from the manifestation of His glory, or from the revelation of the interior truths of His Holy Word, since all faith, properly so called, is the result of the reception of interior truth seen in its connection with its Divine Source, the Great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle?

A. By the literal sense of this miracle I am taught again to adore the Divinity and Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, so wonderfully displayed in the act of turning water into wine, whilst, by its spiritual sense, I am taught an additional edifying lesson both of instruction and of comfort. For, from its spiritual sense, I learn that the Blessed Jesus is ever in the act of turning water into wine in the minds of all His true disciples, by raising them out of natural and external views of the truths of His Holy Word, into spiritual and internal views, and by thus enabling them to see, that His Holy Word throughout, with all its representatives and significatives, both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation, has respect to Himself, and to the interior spiritual things of His eternal kingdom. Lastly, I learn that every church, at its commencement, is founded on truths derived from the heavenly good of love and charity, but that in the process of its decay, those truths are separated from their heavenly source, and are thus deprived of their life, being received and taught under the influence of self-love and the love of the world. I am resolved, therefore, through Divine assistance, to profit by the above instruction, and for this purpose to keep my eye constantly fixed on the Incarnate God, whensoever I am admitted to the high honour and happiness of hearing and reading His Holy Word, that so I may discover that He is the very life and soul of all its sacred truths, and that every type and figure points to Him and His Kingdom as the great realities in which they originate. Thus may I hope to see the water turned into wine in myself, and in that conversion to behold a new manifestation of my Saviour's glory, which may conduct me finally to the blessed privilege of ranking among those happy ones of whom it is said, that "they believed on Him." AMEN.

THE IMPOTENT MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

JOHN V. 2—14.

“ Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

Q. WHAT do you understand by these words?

A. These words have both a literal and a spiritual meaning; and according to their literal meaning they are to be understood as they are literally expressed, though commentators differ about this meaning, some calling it a “sheep-market,” and others a “sheep-gate,” whilst others conceive that the adjective “sheep” ought to be

joined to the substantive "pool." This difference, however, about the letter, does not affect the spiritual sense and meaning of the words, according to which sense and meaning they have relation, not to a pool of natural water, but to a pool of spiritual water, even to the Eternal truth of the Word of God, which is called "a pool" by reason of the knowledges of good and truth which it contains. For the Word of God is sometimes called a "pool," sometimes a "fountain," sometimes a "well," and sometimes a "river," and all in relation to the several states of its reception in the human mind, being called a pool when it is received merely in the knowledge of what is good and true; and being called a fountain, when it is received together with the life and love of knowledge; and being called a well, when it is admitted in a state of less purity; and lastly, being called a river, when it is seen in connection with its Divine Source, or with the "fountain of living waters." That a pool denotes the knowledges of what is good and true derived from the Word of God, may be confirmed by the following passages, where those knowledges are treated of, "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty lands springs of water;" (Isaiah xxxv. 7.) again, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water." (xli. 18.) This pool is, therefore, called "Bethesda" in the Hebrew tongue, because by Bethesda is meant the "house of mercy," and is thus a name fitly applied to the Word of God, as containing in it all the fulness of the Divine Mercy and Loving-kindness: it is also said to have "five porches," because by a porch is meant what introduces to a house, and when applied to the house of mercy, as in the present case, it denotes those introductory truths, which conduct to heavenly knowledge and life. Lastly, by "the great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, lying in those (porches), and waiting for the moving of the water," are to be understood all those of the human race, who are

made sensible of their spiritual disorders, whether arising from the want of truth or of its good, and who apply to the Word of God as to the only medicine from which they can expect a cure.

Q. And what do you here understand by “the moving of the water”?

A. By “moving,” or, as it is expressed in the next verse, “troubling,” [or disturbing,] is signified to vivify, or to give Divine life, which signification is grounded in correspondence, since all motion corresponds to a state of thought, whence progressions, journeyings, and the like, which are acts of motion, in the Holy Word signify states of life. By “moving the water,” therefore, in the above passages, is signified vivification by acknowledgment and faith, thus also purification by truths; and by “healing” is represented the restoration of spiritual life. This moving or disturbing of the water is an effect of the Divine Presence and operation, and accordingly it is written in the next verse, that “an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled [or disturbed] the water,” to teach the instructive lesson, that the Almighty is always in the act of vivifying, or giving life to, His Holy Word in the mind of man, by filling it with His own blessed spirit of love and charity. This act of the Almighty is here called “troubling” [or disturbing] the water,” because it is attended with trouble or disturbance to the natural mind of man, during the process of His purification from unclean loves, but when that process is ended, by virtue of the healing power of the water, then disturbance ceases, and is succeeded by a state of peace and rest.

Q. But it is written, that “Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” What do you conceive to be the force and meaning of these words?

A. By “stepping into water,” according to the above spiritual interpretation of this history, is to be understood instruction in the knowledges of what is good and true from the Word of God; and by “first” stepping

in is denoted, not precedence in point of time, but in regard to affection, implying that the first or supreme affection is engaged in that instruction, according as it is said by Jesus Christ in another place, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," (Matt. vi. 33.) where by seeking "first" the kingdom of God and His righteousness is signified the seeking those eternal blessings above all other blessings, thus with the first or supreme affection of the will or love. It is not, therefore, to be understood, as the sense of the letter appears to suggest, that the virtue of the water extends only to the single person who first steps into it, but it is to be understood, agreeably to the dictate of the spiritual sense, that whosoever receives instruction from the Word of God, with all his heart, and mind, and soul, under an acknowledgment that it is continually vivified by the Divine Presence and life, is made whole of whatsoever spiritual disease he had.

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is written, "And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years"?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words relate to a man who had a bodily infirmity, though it does not appear of what nature it was, and who had been waiting a long time in one of the porches for a cure; but according to the spiritual sense of this history, the infirm man here spoken of is to be regarded as a representative figure of all those in the church who labour under spiritual infirmity, and especially under that particular one which prevents their deriving from the Word of God that spiritual strength and support which it was designed to convey. The specific character of this spiritual infirmity is marked in a succeeding verse, where the impotent man answers, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to be put into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me;" (verse 7.) for from the spiritual sense of these words it appears that the impotent man here spoken of was unable of himself to derive proper instruction from the Word of God, in consequence of the intervention of some evil principle of

self-love or the love of the world, which prevailed at the time over heavenly love, and thus stepped down before it. For such is the case at this day with many people, who even apply themselves with a serious purpose to the Word of God for instruction, but who, from the unsteadiness of their resolutions, suffer selfish and worldly motives to interfere, and either to reject the proposed instruction, or if it be admitted, to pervert and defile it, by connecting it with evil affections and ends of life.

Q. But it is written, "That when Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had now been a long time [in that case,] he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" How do you understand these words?

A. According to their literal meaning, these words relate to the impotent man above spoken of; but according to their spiritual meaning, they relate to those in the church who are represented by this impotent man, agreeably to what has been shown above; and in this view, by Jesus seeing him lie, is denoted Divine inspection into the state of such; and by His knowing that he had been now a long time [in that case,] is denoted Divine Omniscience respecting every stage of spiritual infirmity and disorder; and by His saying, "Wilt thou be made whole?" is to be understood Divine exploration of the secret purposes and intentions of such persons, and how far it is the real governing desire of their hearts to enter into a process of spiritual purification, by means of instruction from the Word of God.

Q. And how do you understand the two following verses, where it is written, "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked"?

A. From the literal sense of these words, I am taught again to adore the mercy and Omnipotence of the Incarnate God manifested in the cure of bodily infirmity; and from their spiritual sense I learn another most edifying lesson relating to the cure of mental disease. For according to this latter sense, when the Blessed Jesus saith to the impotent man, "Rise," He announceth His

Divine power to elevate the will and affections of mankind to Himself, as to the Divine Source of all good; and when He saith further, "Take up thy bed," He means to announce the same power ever near at hand, to elevate the natural mind with all its persuasions to the same Source; and lastly, when He adds, "and walk," He inculcates the weighty duty of living according to such elevation; for by "walking," as was observed in treating on a former miracle, is signified "to live." Accordingly, the effect of the Divine Word instantly followed, for it is said, "that immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked," where by being "made whole" is signified purification from evils, through the reception of the cleansing power of the Divine truth.

Q. But it is lastly written, that "afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith unto him, Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." What do you here understand by the Divine injunction to "sin no more," and by the Divine caution, "lest a worse thing come unto thee"?

A. By the Divine injunction to "sin no more," is meant exhortation to live according to the laws of Divine order, which laws are all the holy truths contained in the Word of God; and by the caution, "lest a worse thing come unto thee," is denoted the danger of profanation, the worst kind of which consists in first acknowledging Divine truths and living according to them, and afterward receding from and denying them, in which case, holy things are mixed with profane in such a manner that they cannot be separated, and yet they must be separated before the spirit can be either in heaven or hell.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from this miracle?

A. From its literal sense, I am taught further to adore the mercy and Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, displayed in the cure of bodily infirmity; whilst from its spiritual sense I am taught the edifying lesson, that the Word of God is ever near and present with man, as a pool of heavenly water, intended for his purification from

all his natural evils, and for his restoration thus to all the strength and comfort of spiritual life. I learn, further, that this pool is in connection with the Divine mercy, and is, therefore, properly called "Bethesda," or the house of mercy, so that all who wash in the pool are not only purified from their natural evils, but become at the same time the blessed habitations of the Divine compassion and tender pity of the Blessed Jesus. I am instructed, yet further, that all, who are made sensible of their infirmities and disorders, lie in the porches of this house ; in other words, apply to the Book of Revelation to be instructed in its holy truths, but that some of these, for want of a fixed purpose to profit by instruction, suffer the evils of selfish and worldly love to prevail, so as to prevent their receiving the full effect of the spiritual medicine which they seek, until they receive strength from the Divine presence and operation, together with a caution to be more guarded in future against the influences of disorderly love. I am resolved, therefore, to attend well to the above instructive lessons, and whensoever I take my place at the "pool of Bethesda" for the cure of my spiritual disorders, I am resolved, further, to watch well over my purposes in applying to the blessed water for purification, that so none but a pure and heavenly purpose may be present, and that no defiled affection may step in, and deprive me of the blessing which I looked for in the Word of Life. Thus may I hope finally to hear from my God and Saviour the consolatory and vivifying words, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk ;" and thus, too, in obedience to Divine command, shall I also, like the impotent man of old, elevate my heart with all its best affections and thoughts to my Great Creator, and continue to live according to the laws of His Divine order, and "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto me." AMEN.

THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH.

JOHN ix. 1—7.

“ And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “a man blind from his birth?”

A. According to the sense of the letter of this history, by “a man blind from his birth,” is meant one who was born blind, or without the use and enjoyment of the organs of bodily sight; but according to the spiritual sense involved in this and in all other miracles wrought by the Blessed Jesus, by the “blind man,” here recorded, are figured and represented those who are spiritually blind, or those who are destitute of the saving knowledge of heavenly truth; and by being “blind from his birth,” is further figured and represented the state of the Gentiles, or of those who, when they have the faculty of receiving instruction in the knowledge either of moral or religious truth, never receive it, and who, consequently, are mere sensual men, believing only the testimony of their

senses, and acknowledging nothing to be true but what they can confirm by their senses.

Q. And how do you understand the reply which the Blessed Jesus here makes to the question proposed by His disciples, when He says, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him"?

A. It appears from the mode of expression here adopted, as if the Blessed Jesus pronounced both the man and his parents free from sin, and thus that He contradicts the testimony of His apostles, one of whom says, "All have sinned;" (Rom. iii. 23.) whilst another says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" (1 John i. 8.) but this appearance arises from separating the former part of the above words from the latter, instead of reading them in the connection in which they stand. For if they be read in connection, their combined sense will then be this, "Neither hath this man sinned, or his parents, (in such a manner or degree,) but that the works of God may be made manifest in him," which is the same thing as if He had said, Both this man and his parents may have sinned, but still they are not out of the reach of Divine Mercy and operation, and, therefore, their sin may tend to manifest more fully the works of that mercy, in effecting their purification and regeneration, which effects are in an eminent sense the works of God. A similar mode of expression occurs in another evangelist, where the Blessed Jesus replies to the mother of Zebedee's children, "To sit on My right hand, and on My left is not Mine to give, but (it shall be given to those) for whom it is prepared of My Father;" (Matt. xx. 23.) and this mode of expression has led many into the error of supposing, that to sit on His right hand and on His left are not His to give, whereas if the former part of the words be connected with the latter, no such declaration is made. For in a connected series, the import in the above words, when read without the interpolation made by the translators, is

to this effect, "To sit on My right hand, and on My left is not Mine to give, but (or except) to those for whom it is prepared of My Father;" thus the declaration of the Blessed Jesus amounts only to this, that He cannot confer the joys of heaven on those who are not in a state of purification and preparation to receive them, but only on those who are prepared, and whose preparation is of the Father; in other words, of what is signified by "the Father," viz., the Divine good of the Divine love; for when the Father and the Son are spoken of distinctly, by the former is to be understood the Divine good of the Divine love, and by the latter the Divine truth of the Divine wisdom.

Q. But the Blessed Jesus immediately adds, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Can you see any connection between these words and those of the preceding verse?

A. Yes: the Blessed Jesus, in the preceding verse, had been speaking of the works of God, and now He declares in the present verse, that these works must be wrought by Himself in the "day" and not in the "night;" in other words, they must be wrought when the principles of goodness and truth are admitted by man, and not when they are rejected. For the principal works of God consist in the purification and regeneration of human minds, and these works cannot be accomplished where evil and error, which constitute "spiritual night," abound, but only in the "day" of the dawning of heavenly goodness and truth. Jesus Christ accordingly teaches in the succeeding verse, that this "day" cometh from Himself, and that consequently He is the God who performs the mighty works of man's purification and regeneration, for He declares, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world;" in other words, I am that Divine truth from which and by which all purification and regeneration is affected, for Divine truth is "light," and by Divine truth and life according to it, man is purified and regenerated.

Q. And how do you understand the words which next follow, "When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," (which is by interpretation, "Sent")?

A. These words, like the foregoing, have both a literal and a spiritual meaning; and according to their literal meaning they are to be understood as they are expressed; but according to their spiritual meaning, they are to be understood in relation to the recovery of spiritual sight, which is the understanding of truth, amongst those who are signified by "the man" in this history who "was blind from his birth." Agreeably to this meaning, by Jesus thus "speaking," is to be understood the declaration which He had just made of His Supreme Divinity, consequently of His Divine Humanity, as being the only source of all Divine faith; and by His "spitting on the ground and making clay of the spittle, and anointing the eyes of the blind man with the clay," is further to be understood the preparation and application of a lower order of truth in His Holy Word, called sensual truth, or truth adapted to the apprehension of sensual men, or minds, such as have been above described; for by "clay made of spittle," such an order of truth is signified and represented. It is remarkable, therefore, that on this occasion the Blessed Jesus does not address this blind man as, on two former occasions, He had addressed other blind men, saying, in one instance, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Matt. ix. 28.) and in another instance, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" (Matt. xx. 32.) Neither doth He touch the eyes, as in the two other cases, but He makes clay with spittle, and anoints the eyes, bidding the blind man "Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam;" from all which circumstances it is evident that another and distinct kind of blindness is here described, consequently another and distinct kind of restored sight. It is evident, also, that the blindness here described is of a grosser and more

external kind than in the former cases, because in the first place it did not admit of immediate communication with the Divine healing power by "the touch," and in the second place, it required for its cure a medium of a grosser and more external nature. Such a medium is the clay here described, and which is figurative of that order of truth in the Holy Word which may be called sensual truth, because adapted to the sensual mind, and best fitted for its restoration to the blessing of spiritual sight. Of this order of truth are all those passages in the Holy Word, where Divine and heavenly things are described under figures most striking to the senses, as under the figures of crowns, thrones, feasts, music, dancing, &c. The man in the above history is accordingly bidden by his Saviour to "Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam," because by going, is to be understood living, and by washing in the pool of Siloam, is further to be understood purification from evil by means of the above order of truth, which is called "Siloam," or "sent," to denote that it proceeds from the Divine source of truth, the Divine Humanity of the Blessed Jesus, which Humanity for the same reason is said to be "sent," (ver. 4.) because it proceeded or came forth from the Eternal Father. (See John xvi. 28.)

Q. But it is said of the blind man, at the conclusion of the verse, that he "went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." How do you understand these words?

A. In agreement with the spiritual sense of this history, as above described, these words are to be understood spiritually; whilst according to the literal sense, they are to be understood literally, and were literally accomplished. And in agreement with the spiritual sense, by the man going his way, is to be understood obedience to the Divine counsel amongst those who are represented by the man; and by washing, is denoted purification from evil in consequence of such disobedience; and coming seeing, is further denoted that they afterwards live according to the understanding of truth,

to which their minds were opened. Thus the words, taken collectively, denote the full effect produced by that order of sensual truth which had been provided and recommended.

Q. In the succeeding part of this history, a long account is given of the agitation and disturbance which this miracle occasioned amongst the Pharisees, and how finally they "cast the blind man out" (of the synagogue). What instruction do you learn from this part of the history?

A. From the perverseness of the Pharisees on this occasion, I am taught the instructive lesson, that there is no blindness so terrible, and so difficult to cure, as that which arises from a corrupt will, especially if hypocrisy, or an external sanctity, be added to that corruption. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, at the conclusion of this history, makes the following interesting declaration, "For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind," from which words I learn that they, who are out of the pale of the church, and are not in possession of the oracles of Divine truth, are in a better state to admit the truth, and thus recover intellectual sight, than those within the church, who enjoy the benefit of instruction from the Word of God, and who, nevertheless, do not form their lives according to the purity of such instruction. The "truly seeing," therefore, are they who acknowledge all their wisdom, together with its affection, to come from the God of Heaven, whilst the "truly blind" are they who believe their wisdom and its affection to be derived from themselves.

Q. But it is lastly written, that "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he

worshipped Him." What do you conceive to be the import and meaning of these words ?

A. According to the sense of the letter, these words relate to the blind man whose history is here recorded ; but according to the spiritual sense, they relate to those who are represented by this blind man, viz., the Gentiles, who are without the Holy Word, and therefore uninstructed, but who afterwards receive instruction, and have the eyes of their understandings opened by the sense of the letter of the Word. In reference, therefore, to these Gentiles, by Jesus finding the blind man, and saying unto him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God," is to be understood Divine inquisition into the quality of their faith, and whether it was directed to the Lord in His Divine Humanity ; and by the man answering and saying, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him ?" is to be understood inquiry on the part of the Gentiles concerning the Divine Humanity ; and by Jesus saying unto him, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee," is further to be understood that the Divine Humanity of the Incarnate God is discoverable in every truth of the Holy Word, because the Holy Word throughout treats of His glorification ; and lastly, by the blind man saying, "Lord, I believe," and afterwards worshipping Him, is to be understood that the Gentiles, when instructed from the Holy Word, acknowledge the Divine Humanity of the Lord, and adore Him in that Humanity as the only God of heaven and earth.

Q. In the gospel according to St. Mark, a miracle is recorded which bears some resemblance to the one here treated of, for it is there written, that "they brought a blind man unto Jesus, and besought Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town ; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up and said, I see men as trees, walking. And after that He put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up ; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And He sent him

away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town." (Mark viii. 22—27.) Can you briefly explain to me the spiritual sense of this miracle in reference to the particular circumstances which distinguish it from the miracle above treated of?

A. By "leading the blind man out of the town," in the present instance, is to be understood removal from former opinions and doctrines of truth; and by the man looking up, and saying, "I see men as trees, walking," is further to be understood obscure and general perception of truth, such as is derived from the letter of the Sacred Scriptures; and by his being restored, and seeing every man clearly, after that he was touched a second time by the Great Saviour, is denoted that the understanding was then opened to the discernment of truth in its internal form or spirit, as well as in its external appearance; lastly, by Jesus sending him away to his house, and saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town," is further to be understood that the interior perceptions of truth which had been communicated, should be interiorly cherished and obeyed, and likewise that they should be kept separate from the influence and operation of former persuasions and opinions.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle?

A. From the letter or literal sense of this history, I am again taught to adore the Divine Omnipotence of my God and Saviour, exerted in the cure of a man "blind from his birth;" and from the spiritual sense, I am taught several weighty lessons of instruction relative to spiritual blindness, and to its cure by the same Omnipotence. For, respecting spiritual blindness, I am taught by the above history that there is a blindness arising from the want of early instruction, such as is that of the Gentiles, who are out of the church, and, consequently, receive no instruction from the Holy Word, and who on this account are sensual men, and believe nothing but what is in agreement with the evidence of the senses. And in regard to the cure of this blindness, I am taught

that it is provided in the Holy Word, and is there to be found in the letter, under the form of "sensual truth," which is the "clay made of spittle" in the above history, and is accommodated to the apprehension of sensual minds, leading them finally to the acknowledgment and worship of the Incarnate God in His Divine Humanity. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth to attend carefully to all the sources and consequent qualities of spiritual blindness in my own mind, and to "go and wash in the pool of Siloam" whensoever I find that the sensual mind prevails so as to darken in me the light of the eternal truth. Thus may I humbly hope, like the blind man in the above history, to "come seeing;" and, finally, like him, to be enabled to say, "Lord, I believe," and by believing become a true worshipper of the Living God in His Divine Humanity. AMEN.

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

JOHN xi. 1—44.

“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby,” &c.

THE particulars related in this chapter concerning Lazarus, previously to his being raised from the dead, are so numerous and likewise so important, that it would require a volume to give a full and satisfactory explanation of their spiritual meaning. We must, therefore, be content to pass them by, and proceed immediately to the interpretation of the several circumstances recorded when the Blessed Jesus took His station at the grave of the deceased, and prepared directly for the exercise of His Divine Omnipotence. Nevertheless, it may be proper to remark, as a clue to the elucidation of the introductory parts of the history, that by “Lazarus” are here represented “the Gentiles,” as also in the parable; (Luke xvi. 20.) and by his being raised from the dead, is further figured the establishment of a new church amongst the Gentiles, and in every individual; for the establishment of a church, in all cases, implies the communication of spiritual life by the removal of evils and errors; thus it implies also resurrection from the dead, since wheresoever evil and error prevail, there is death. This being premised, the reader will now consider himself as standing at the grave of Lazarus, and will there ask—

Q. How are the following words to be understood, where it is written, "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it" ? (verse 38.)

A. It had been before said, on this occasion, that "Jesus groaned in the spirit ;" (verse 33.) therefore, when it is now said that "He groaned in Himself," it implies a two-fold groaning, and since by "groaning," when spoken of the Divine Being, is meant a vehement emotion of Divine principles ; by a two-fold groaning, or what is here called "again" groaning, is to be understood a vehement emotion of the Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, occasioned by the circumstances which presented themselves when viewed both literally and representatively. By His "coming to the grave," under this emotion, is further to be understood, not only His Divine Presence at the tomb of Lazarus, but also at what is here figured by a tomb, viz., the principles of unregenerate life ; in other words, the principles of selfish and worldly love, which "entomb" the mind of man in its natural state, and prevent its arising to the sense and enjoyment of its proper life in the love of God and its neighbour. It is said of this tomb or grave, that it was "a cave, and a stone lay upon it," because by "a cave," according to the spiritual idea involved in this history, is denoted an obscure state of faith and of love ; and by "a stone laying upon it," is further signified that this obscurity was occasioned by false persuasions of the understanding, which darkened the light of truth. For "stone," when applied in a good sense, signifies Divine Truth, and especially the truth which announces the Divinity of Jesus Christ, who is accordingly called "the stone which the builders refused ;" but in the opposite sense, the terms "stone" and "stony" are applied in the Sacred Scriptures to denote false persuasions and the effects thereby produced, agreeably to which meaning it is written of the angels concerning the Lord, "They shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone ;" (Psalm xci. 11, 12.) again it is written of the

Lord and His vineyard, that "He gathered out the stones thereof;" (Isa. v. 2.) and again it is said in the prophet, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezech. xxxvi. 26.)

Q. But it is written, "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone." How do you understand these words?

A. As applied to the grave of Lazarus, these words are to be understood literally, but as applied to the establishment of a church, and to the regeneration of man, they are to be understood spiritually, and according to their spiritual meaning they contain a lesson of the deepest importance. For according to this meaning, to take away the stone is to remove from the understanding all false persuasions which are opposed to the Eternal Truth; thus all vain thoughts, all foolish imaginations, all perverse judgment, which prevent the voice of the Divine Wisdom from being heard, and its salutary saving effects from being experienced. "Take ye away the stone," is, therefore, a primary law and condition of man's reformation, regeneration, and salvation, since until this is effected, the Omnipotent voice of the Divine Mercy and Truth cannot be heard, and the terrible consequence must be that man will remain for ever dead and buried in the grave of impure and defiled affections and appetites.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the import of the observation made on this occasion by "Martha the sister of him that was dead," who "saith unto Jesus, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days"?

A. From these words I learn how difficult a thing it is to acquire a right faith in the Omnipotence of the Great Redeemer, for although this Redeemer had before said unto the messenger sent unto Him, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God;" (see verse fourth of this chapter.) and although He had before declared unto Martha, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" (ver. 25.) still when her faith is put to the proof, it is found wavering and defective, and she thinks it impossible that life can be restored to a putrid carcase.

And just so it is with those who are here represented by Martha, or those who are in the affection of truth, (for Martha and her sister Mary, in this history, are representative of the two affections, of good and of truth,) when their faith is put to the proof respecting “spiritual resurrection,” or the establishment of a new church, which is the restoration of spiritual life to those who have been long “dead in trespasses and sins.” For on this occasion they see nothing but difficulties and impossibilities, even though they have been previously instructed concerning the Divine Omnipotence, and viewing only the principle of evil in its terrible death and defilement, they forget that “all things are possible to him that believeth,” and that even the putrid and offensive carcase of human sin and corruption may, in the hour of true repentance, administer “to the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.”

Q. And how do you understand the following words which were spoken in reply, “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

A. By “believing,” is here to be understood faith in the Incarnate God, or in the Divine Humanity of that God, in which He reigns as the Great Father and Almighty Sovereign of heaven and earth; and by “seeing the glory of God” in consequence of such a faith, is to be understood a perception of the Divine presence, power, and operation of the Most High in His Word and in His works,—in His Word, by the manifestation of His Divine Truth, with which its interior contents are filled, and with which they are in perpetual connection; and in His works, by the government of His Divine providence in all human concerns howsoever minute, and especially by that interior operation which He exercises continually in the minds of men, whilst He guards them from infernal force and delusion, and through the influence of His Holy Spirit purifies, reforms, regenerates, and finally elevates them to conjunction of life with Himself. As, therefore, a belief in the Incarnate God is the duty to

which every Christian is called, so to “see the glory of God” is the high privilege and distinguished blessing annexed to that duty, and resulting from it.

Q. But it follows, that when the Blessed Jesus had spoken these words, “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said (it), that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn from these words a most edifying lesson in two distinct respects,—first, that the stone was then removed from where the dead man lay, as soon as the Blessed Jesus uttered the words of Eternal Truth and power—“Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” for by removing the stone, as was above observed, is spiritually signified the removal and dispersion of false principles and persuasions in the natural or unregenerate mind, which can only be affected by the revelation of the Eternal Truth; secondly, that the Blessed Jesus, in His intercourse with the Father, whether in the way of prayer or of thanksgiving, always addressed Him as a being in and one with Himself, and that if He appeared at any time to address a being out of and separate from Himself, it was for the sake of others, or, as it is here expressed, “because of the people that stood by.” Thus, on another occasion, when “there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again, Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes.” (John xii. 28—30.) It is well, therefore, to be understood, that all the expressions of evangelical history which speak of the Blessed Jesus as “praying to the Father,” as “coming to do the will of the Father,” and as “being sent of the Father,” and which thus suggest the idea of two separate and distinct beings or persons, are to be interpreted of one and the same being, inasmuch as the Father was the essential

life and soul of the Humanity of the Blessed Jesus, whilst that Humanity was consequently the body, which proceeding from that life and soul, was perpetually obedient to it, and by such obedience became finally united with it in such a sort as to become the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending of all Divine life, power, and benediction, consequently, "God over all, blessed for ever." (Rev. i. 8, 17; Rom. ix. 5.)

Q. And how do you understand the words which follow, where it is said, "When He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth?"

A. By the words, "when He had thus spoken," is to be understood, when He had thus proclaimed His oneness and union with the Father, for in the foregoing verse He had been speaking of that oneness and union: it therefore follows that "He cried with a loud [or great] voice;" because "crying" has reference to the will, or love, in this case, therefore, to the Divine will, or love; and "a great voice" is expressive of the Divine wisdom of that love; thus by "crying with a loud voice" is here signified the Omnipotence of the Divine wisdom proceeding from the Humanity of the Blessed Jesus in union with His Divinity. It accordingly follows, "Lazarus come forth," because the wisdom of the Divine love is continually in operation to raise all things and principles out of death into life, thus out of darkness into light, consequently out of misery into bliss, and out of a state of separation from God, into a state of eternal conjunction of life with Him. The Divine words, therefore, "Lazarus come forth," apply on this occasion, not only to the dead body of him who had been "four days in the grave," but likewise to all people, nations, and individuals, whatsoever, who are "dead in trespasses and sins," to the knowledge and enjoyment of their proper life in the love of God and heaven, calling them to the recovery of that life, and with this view to the exercise of those faculties which God has given them, and thus to the elevation of their affections and thoughts out of that

grave of selfish and worldly love, in which they had been before entombed.

Q. And what do you conceive to be meant when it is said, "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin"?

A. According to the literal sense of these words, they relate to the dead body of the deceased Lazarus, and were literally fulfilled by the resurrection of that body; but according to the spiritual sense, the words relate to dead principles, whether in the church in general or in the individuals who compose it, implying resurrection out of those principles, thus the elevation of human affections and thoughts to the Great and Holy God and His eternal kingdom. Agreeably to this sense of the words, by "being bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," is to be understood the imprisonment of all thought, both interior and exterior, by false principles and persuasions; and by "the face being bound about with a napkin," is meant a similar imprisonment of the love and affection, for "the face" is a representative image of those interior principles, and is accordingly applied in the Sacred Scriptures.

Q. But it follows, "Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." How do you understand these words?

A. The Blessed Jesus is not content with calling forth dead men and dead principles to a resurrection to life and blessedness, but His Omnipotent voice further operates to a restoration of their spiritual liberty, by breaking the bonds of those false persuasions in which they had been before imprisoned. The Divine words, therefore, "Loose him, and let him go," apply in this case not only to the deceased Lazarus, but also to all those who have been at any time, or who are tied and bound with the chain of erroneous doctrines, of heretical tenets, of false imaginations, and of perverse thoughts, calling them to break their bonds, by exercising the liberty which God has given them of thinking in agreement with His Holy Word, and thus of forming their understandings according to the light of the Eternal Truth,

and their lives according to their understandings. It is to be remarked that the words "Loose him," have reference to the above liberation of the affections and thoughts, and that the words "let him go," relate to the formation of the life according to the truth by which that liberation was effected.

Q. And what instruction do you derive from the concluding words of this history, where it is written, that "then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him; but some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done"?

A. I learn from these words how much depends on the temper and disposition of mind in which people hear and read the Word and meditate on the works of God, because in all ages of the world both the Word and the works of God have divided the sentiments of mankind, leading some to a full acknowledgment and adoration of the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty, whilst they have led others to despise and reject both His wisdom and His goodness. This observation is remarkably verified in the present instance, where the resurrection of the dead Lazarus induces many to believe in the Great Incarnate God, and some to go and tell it to the Pharisees; thus proving incontestibly that no miracle, howsoever well attested, and not even the rising of one from the dead, can induce men to believe in a Divine agency and operation, unless there be a previous disposition to admit the truth, and to be persuaded by it. So true are those words of the Great Saviour on another occasion, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John iii. 20, 21.)

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the above miracle?

A. From the literal sense of this miracle, I am taught again to adore that Omnipotent Word of my Saviour

God, which was able to call forth a dead man from his tomb, in which he had laid during a period of four days ; and from the spiritual sense of the same history, I am further instructed respecting the boundless power of the same Divine Word, in raising up to life both churches and the individuals who compose them, when they also have been long “ dead in trespasses and sins.” I am yet further instructed, that on the occasion of this spiritual resurrection, the first injunction of the Eternal Truth is to “ take away the stone ;” in other words, to remove from the heart and life all those false principles and persuasions, which, having their origin in infernal loves, tend to alienate the soul from God, by rendering it insensible to the blessing of His mercy and truth ; and the second is, to “ come forth ;” in other words, to elevate the affections and thoughts to an eternal object, by raising them above the shadowy perishable goods of this lower world, to the possession and enjoyment of a substantial and permanent bliss in the love and favour of the Great Father of Being. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth to attend carefully and continually to this spiritual resurrection in my own mind and life, that so I may no longer lie dead and buried in the grave of mere earthly attachments, bodily appetites, and selfish affections, but, listening to the “ loud voice ” of my Saviour God, may rise to the contemplation and enjoyment of the Supreme Good, in the unfeigned love of Him and of my fellow-creatures. Thus may I humbly hope to hear, in spirit and in effect, the reviving consolatory words, “ Lazarus, come forth,” and in obedience to the Divine command, I also, like Lazarus of old, shall come forth from my dark sepulchre, to be a living monument to all eternity of the Divine mercy and Omnipotence, and to join in the blessed song, “ O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” (Hosea xiii. 14.) AMEN.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

MATT. XXVIII. 1—20 ; MARK XVI. 1—20 ; LUKE XXIV. 1—53 ;
JOHN XX. 1—31, XXI. 1—25.

The particular circumstances recorded in the evangelical history relative to these two grand events, like those connected with the resurrection of Lazarus, in the preceding miracle, are so numerous and so important, that it would require a volume to give an explanation of each distinctly. It is, therefore, thought proper, as in the foregoing miracle, to make a selection of the more distinguished parts, which enter into the composition of the above histories, and it is hoped that a satisfactory explanation of them will be found in the following questions and answers.

Q. Are you quite correct, when you rank the resurrection and ascension of the Blessed Jesus under the class of miracles which He wrought ?

A. Yes ; for no one can doubt but that each of those events required a supernatural agency for its accomplishment, consequently that it was miraculous ; and it is alike evident that each event was wrought by Jesus Christ Himself, and not by any other being, since He Himself declares concerning His resurrection, “ I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it

again ;" (John x. 17, 18.) and again, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But He spake of the temple of His body." (John ii. 19, 21.) It is manifest, therefore, from these words, that the Blessed Jesus rose again from the dead by His own Divine energy, or by virtue of the Divinity within Himself, and not only so, but that of Himself He laid down His life, and that, consequently, the Jews had no power to crucify Him but what He gave them. And as we are thus constrained by the testimony of Jesus Christ to assert that He raised Himself from the dead by His own Divine energy, so are we constrained, in like manner, to refer His ascension to the same source of Omnipotence, and thus to insist that no other power but His own was instrumental in effecting it.

Q. What do you conceive to be the evidence on which the grand facts of the resurrection and ascension of the Blessed Jesus rest, and by which they are supported?

A. The evidence in favour of both these facts is as strong and conclusive, or more so, than that by which any other historical fact whatsoever is established; for it is an evidence grounded in prophecy, and confirmed by the senses of a great number of witnesses. That it is grounded in prophecy, is manifest from all those various passages in the Sacred Scriptures in which the facts to which it relates are predicted; and that it was confirmed by the senses of a multitude of witnesses, is alike evident from every part of the gospel history in which those facts are recorded. Thus the Blessed Jesus, after His resurrection, was first seen by some pious women, next by some of His apostles, afterwards by them all, and lastly, as St. Paul testifies, "by five hundred brethren at once." He did also eat and converse with many of His disciples; and His resurrection was further confirmed by the vision and voice of angelic beings. (See Matt. xxviii. 2—8; Mark xvi. 5; Luke xxiv. 4—8.) There cannot, therefore, remain a single doubt in the well-disposed mind respecting the undeniable evidence by which the above facts are supported, and on which they rest.

Q. Is it to be supposed that the Blessed Jesus rose from the grave with His whole body complete, or, as some conceive, that its material part was dissipated in the tomb, and that thus He rose merely in a spiritual body, such as the angels have ?

A. It is to be supposed that He rose with His whole body complete, and that He left nothing behind Him in the sepulchre, consequently, that the material body was not dissipated, but glorified ; and this idea seems confirmed by his own words to His disciples after His resurrection. For when, on this occasion, “ they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit, He said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet.” (Luke xxiv. 37—40.) It is evident, therefore, that the Blessed Jesus rose from the grave with the same identical body of flesh and bones which had been laid in the grave, and which might still be handled and seen, consequently, that His resurrection-body was not mere spirit, for He says, “ a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have ;” and this idea is further confirmed by what He says to Thomas on the occasion, “ Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust into My side : and be not faithless, but believing ;” (John xx. 27.) from which words it is manifest that the hands and the side of the Lord’s resurrection-body were still the same, and in the same perforated state, as when the body was deposited in the tomb.

Q. What, then, do you conceive to have been the peculiar quality of our Lord’s resurrection-body, as distinguished from the bodies of men and of angels.

A. It is perhaps out of the reach of finite intelligencies fully to comprehend what was the precise quality of the Lord’s body at the resurrection. This only we know of a certainty, that it was derived entirely from the Divinity

in Himself, and that no particle of it was derived from the mother Mary, for the body which He had from the mother Mary was successively put off, until He became no longer her Son, as was shown above, in treating of the miracle of water turned into wine, at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, on which occasion Jesus calls His mother, "Woman," (John ii. 4.) thus intimating that He was no longer her Son, but was by nativity as well as by conception the Son of God. The body, then, in which the Blessed Jesus appeared after His resurrection, had an immediate Divine origin, being formed successively from a Divine soul, and thus partaking of Divine qualities, which completely distinguished it from all other bodies, whether of men or of angels. Perhaps Divine Substantiality is the most characteristic term by which the distinction can be marked, so that whilst the body of a man is called material, and the body of an angel, spiritual, the resurrection-body of the Lord may be fitly and properly called a Divine Substantial Body.

Q. And what do you conceive further to have been the quality of the Lord's body after the resurrection, as distinguished from its quality when He was alive in the world?

A. By the passion of the cross, which was the last temptation endured by the Blessed Jesus, it is reasonable to suppose that a deeper humiliation of the humanity was effected than had before taken place, and thus that hereditary evil, contracted from the mother, was more completely and radically removed. This being the case, it is reasonable to suppose further, that when the Divinity began again to operate, as in the tomb, on this entirely submissive and purified humanity, it would take a more entire possession than it had done before, until at length the possession was complete, and the humanity became what may most properly be called a Divine Humanity. This increase of Divine virtue and life in the humanity had been before hinted at and accounted for in those remarkable words of Jesus Christ, where He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground

and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit ;" (John xii. 24.) for the blessed Jesus is here speaking of Himself, His own sufferings, death, and resurrection, intimating by this most significant language, that without sufferings and death His Humanity must have abided alone, or not have been fully united with its Divinity, but that by sufferings and death His Humanity became so entirely submitted, as to be capable of entering into the closest union with its Divinity, which was its "bearing much fruit." The same, also, is true in regard to man, who, it is well known, when humbled by trials and sufferings, is rendered capable of admitting into himself more of spiritual life than before, and the only difference between the Blessed Jesus and His creatures, in this respect, is, that His creatures by trials and sufferings become more admissive of spiritual life, whereas He became more admissive of Divine life, thus, of the Essential Divinity.

Q. You say that the passion of the cross was the last temptation endured by the Blessed Jesus, and you seem to regard it, not as constituting in itself the redemption of man, but only as a process leading to redemption. In what, then, do you suppose the redemption of man properly consists ?

A. The redemption of man properly consists in the subjugation of the powers of darkness, in the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and in the consequent establishment of a new church here on earth, all which Divine acts were performed by the Blessed Jesus during His abode here on earth, through the process of His various sufferings and temptations, which were nothing else but combats against the infernal hosts, for the purpose of removing them from man. It has, indeed, been generally supposed that the passion of the cross was itself redemption, and that by the vicarious sacrifice there offered for the sins of the world, a full and sufficient satisfaction was made to the offended justice of the Almighty, and mankind were thus placed in a state of reconciliation and acceptance with Him. But this idea

vanishes at once, when it is considered what is the genuine idea of redemption as above stated, and that the Almighty required no satisfaction but to see His creatures made wise, and holy, and happy, which satisfaction He Himself provided for Himself by appearing here below in the flesh or human nature, by combating in that nature and overcoming the enemies of man's salvation, by giving man access to Himself in the Humanity which He had assumed, and by finally glorifying that Humanity, or making it Divine, that so He might keep heaven for ever open to all such as were disposed to enter, by following Him in the same process to glory.

Q. What, then, do you conceive to be the difference between the state of the Lord's Humanity at the time of His resurrection and the state into which it entered at the period of His ascension?

A. To compare great things with small, the difference was the same as between a mighty conqueror here on earth, when he has just gained a signal victory over his enemies, and the same conqueror when he begins to rest from his labours of combat, and to enter into the tranquillity of peace and the fruit of victory. The Blessed Jesus, therefore, when His Divine combats were completed, of which He gave a proof in His resurrection-glory, did not immediately enter into the rest which was the proposed end of those combats, by fully glorifying His Humanity, or uniting it fully with His Divinity, and, therefore, at this period He says to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (John xx. 17.) It appears, therefore, that the interval of state between the resurrection and the ascension was an interval agreeably to the Divine order, which required a marked distinction to be made between the period of spiritual victory, and the period of rest, to which that victory leads, and this with a view to the instruction of man in his spiritual progress, by teaching him the important lesson, that a state of temptation, even though he conquers in it, is always succeeded by a state of fluctuation, and that a further process in that state of

fluctuation is necessary, before he enters into the full rest and enjoyment of his conquests.

Q. And how do you understand the terms "ascending" and "ascension," as applied to the body or Humanity of Jesus Christ?

A. According to their literal sense, these terms mean "going up on high," but according to their spiritual sense they mean "approaching to what is inmost," that is to say, to the Divine Being, who is in the inmost of all beings, of all things, and of all principles, and who is, therefore, called "The Highest," because He is the inmost and central life of all existence. When, therefore, the body or Humanity of Jesus Christ is said to ascend, by this expression is to be understood that it entered into the closest union with the Divinity from whom it came forth, agreeably to those words of Jesus Christ in another place, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John xvi. 28.) An external appearance, indeed, of ascent, was exhibited on the occasion to His disciples, who, therefore, saw Him as ascending into the visible heavens, whilst "a cloud received Him out of their sight;" but this is to be understood merely as an appearance, accommodated to the apprehension of the natural man, yet as an appearance grounded in, and connected with, the grand reality in which it originated, which reality was nothing else but the full and complete union of Divinity with Humanity, and of Humanity with Divinity, in the glorified person of the Blessed Jesus, until the humanity became a Divine Humanity, and was thus consecrated to be the eternal abode and living temple of the Most High God, having "all power both in heaven and in earth," and being "the First, and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending, which is, which was, and which is to come, The Almighty." (Matt. xxviii. 18; Rev. i. 8, 17.)

Q. But it is written on this occasion, in the gospel according to Mark, "That He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Chap. xvi.

19.) How do you understand these expressions as applied to the body or humanity of the Blessed Jesus?

A. By "being received up into heaven," is to be understood into the angelic heaven, where angels dwell; and by "sitting on the right hand of God," is further to be understood, not sitting on the right hand of another Being separate from Himself, but possessing Omnipotence, which is properly signified by the "right hand of God;" and therefore, in another passage, Jesus Christ Himself calls it "sitting at the right hand of power." (Matt. xxvi. 64.) Thus to sit at the right hand of God is only another expression to denote that He had "all power both in heaven and in earth," as He Himself testifies. (Matt. xxviii. 18.)

Q. What, then, do you conceive to be the Divine purposes, uses, and benefits announced to the world by the manifestation of God here below in a Body or Humanity, also by the sufferings and death of that Body or Humanity; and lastly, by its resurrection and final ascension?

A. The manifestation of God here below in a Body or Humanity, is an assurance to mankind, in the first place, of the ardency of the Divine love towards them, and of the fixedness of the Divine purpose to promote their eternal happiness. For by this manifestation, the Father of Mercies appeared as a Man, and thus in a human form made Himself known and visible to His creatures, who had before lost all knowledge and apprehension both of His being and of His attributes. Under this manifestation, too, He tenderly invited, and even vehemently pressed them to come unto Him, that they might receive remission of sins and have eternal life. By the same manifestation, also, He became their instructor, opening to their intellectual view the interior truths of the Word of the Old Testament, and revealing at the same time a New Word or Testament, which being committed to writing, might stand in His place, and speak with His voice, as a perpetual instructor to the most remote generations. At the same time, in and by the

same Body or Humanity, He set the world an example of that pure and perfect order of life which leads to bliss, teaching mankind that as He, as to His Body or Humanity, was always pressing towards an eternal union with the Divinity from whom He came forth, in like manner it is both the duty and happiness of His creatures to aspire perpetually after conjunction with Himself, the Supreme Good and the Supreme Truth.

Q. And what do you conceive to be the Divine purposes, uses, and benefits announced to the world by the sufferings and death of this Body or Humanity?

A. By His sufferings and death the Blessed Jesus waged a powerful and successful warfare against the enemies of man's salvation, the devil, the world, and the flesh, destroying the dominion of the first, so that whereas he had before gained an undue ascendancy over both the minds and bodies of men, he was now subjugated, and "his goods spoiled" by one stronger than himself. In like manner, the seductions of the world and of the flesh were forced to confess their conqueror, and mankind were thus set more at liberty from their delusions and enchantments. But this Divine Warrior was not content with being Himself both a combatant and a conqueror. He called also His disciples to follow Him in His warfare and His victories, and at the same time by His Divine example He gave them power to follow Him. Thus, all who were wise to repent of their sins, and pant after renovation of life, found a pattern of patience and a renewal of strength in the suffering Humanity of the Holy Jesus, and supported by His example, experienced the truth and comfort of His words, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John xvi. 20.) And again, "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." (John xvi. 21.)

Q. And what do you conceive to be the Divine purposes, uses, and benefits announced to the world by

the resurrection and ascension of the Body or Humanity of Jesus Christ.

A. By His resurrection, Jesus Christ gave a most unequivocal and convincing proof to the world of the existence and operation of a Divine power, superior to death and the grave, and to all the powers of hell, of sin, and of darkness. In His Rising Body, therefore, we behold the total annihilation of the infidel's creed, together with the revival of every virtuous hope, and the vivification, illumination, and support of every virtuous energy. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is now become the Christian's motto, which he "binds for a sign upon his hands, and as frontlets between his eyes," confirming to him the covenant of his God, opening to his delighted view a bright futurity, and encouraging him "to run with patience the race that is set before him." Again, by His ascension, the Blessed Jesus announces to all His pious followers, that the Father of Eternity no longer dwells either in inaccessible light, or inaccessible darkness, but in a visible Body or Humanity, in which He may be at once seen, known, loved, approached, worshipped, and enjoyed, by an everlasting conjunction with Him in life and purity. The true believer, therefore, is no longer perplexed about the object of his worship, but drawing nigh unto the Glorified or Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ in His ascension-glory, and believing that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (Col. ii. 9.) and that "this is the True God and Eternal Life," (1 John v. 20.) he experiences deliverance from error, confirmation of faith, consolation of hope, whilst he views his God as a Divine Man, and hears him say, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." (John xii. 26.)

Q. Do you regard, then, the resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer's body as any security for the resurrection and ascension of your own body?

A. If by my own body you mean that material body of flesh and blood which I at present carry about me, I do not conceive that the resurrection and ascension of the

Blessed Jesus are any security for the resurrection of this body, because I am constrained to believe with St. Paul, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" (1 Cor. xv. 50.) and further, that "it is sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual body." (Ver. 44.) Nevertheless, though I cannot believe that the material body of flesh and blood will ever be raised after death out of its dark tomb of corruption, yet I am fully persuaded that a spiritual body will be raised, and if the life has been formed according to the laws of heavenly truth and order, will be qualified to live for ever in the enjoyment of bliss in the kingdom of God. In this respect, therefore, the resurrection of Jesus Christ differed from the resurrection of other men, inasmuch as He rose again and ascended into heaven, with "His whole body complete, leaving nothing behind Him in the tomb;" whereas other men rise only with spiritual bodies, agreeably to the words of the Blessed Jesus to his disciples, after His resurrection, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." (Luke xxiv. 39.)

Q. Do you recollect any miracle wrought by the Blessed Jesus between the period of His resurrection and His ascension?

A. Yes; He repeated the miracle of the miraculous draught of fishes, recorded by St. Luke, (ch. v.) and explained above.

Q. And in what particulars do the two miracles differ from each other?

A. The miracle wrought after the resurrection differs from the former miracle in these two particulars,—first, that Jesus ordered the disciples to "cast the net on the right side of the ship;" and secondly, that "although there were so many (fishes), yet was not the net broken." (John xxi. 6, 11.)

Q. And what instruction do you learn from these two circumstances of distinction?

A. From the Divine command to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," I learn the important duty binding on all "spiritual fishers," or instructors in heavenly

truth, to “fish,” or instruct, under the influence of heaven-born love and charity, and thus to take good heed lest at any time they separate knowledge from the life of knowledge, or truth from its good, or what amounts to the same—the speculative doctrines of faith from the pure and essential life of charity. And from the second remarkable particular of the net not breaking, I learn the further edifying lesson, that if the above command be attended to, the “gospel net,” in such case, remains entire and unbroken; in other words—the doctrines of evangelical truth preserve their coherence and consistency, no error or heresy can disturb the church, and mankind receive in due measure the light of faith and the life of love, consequently become that blessed church of which Jesus Christ speaks in another place, where He says, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Q. Can you see any reason why the Blessed Jesus, after His resurrection, performed the above miracle in preference to any other?

A. Yes; and the reason appears to be grounded in the representation, or figurative character of the above miracle, according to which it relates to the formation and establishment of a new church here on earth, by the dissemination of evangelical truth or knowledge, which was one great purpose of the Lord’s coming into the world. The above miracle, therefore, is in close connection with what He says to His disciples in another place, and this also after His resurrection, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) for whether we speak of “fishing,” or of “teaching all nations,” the meaning is still the same, according to the spiritual idea; and again, whether we speak of “teaching all nations,” or of establishing a church, the meaning is the same, since the church can only be founded and established by instruction in heavenly truths. It would seem, therefore, that the Blessed Jesus performed the

above miracle in preference to any other, by reason of its superior interest and importance in regard to that glorious new church which He came to establish, and which He was well aware never could be established, unless the ministers and instructors in that church were attentive to that law of His eternal order, to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," or, as the words have been above explained, to teach the doctrines of faith under the influence of charity, and thus to take heed lest selfish and worldly love, the inordinate desire of human glory or gain, should mix themselves with instruction, and in so doing should "break the gospel net," by destroying the consistency and coherence of the truths of which it is composed.

Q. But in the history of the above miracle it is recorded, that "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three." (John xxi. 11.) Do you conceive that there is any particular spiritual meaning involved in the number, "a hundred and fifty and three," which is here said to be the number of "great fishes" which had been taken?

A. Yes; there is every good reason to believe that all numbers mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, or Word of God, have a spiritual signification, inasmuch as the Word of God throughout must of necessity contain in it spiritual truth, or truth relating to God and His eternal kingdom, and if it did not contain such truth, it could not be the Word of God. We are constrained, therefore, to say, that all numbers which are recorded in the Word of God involve in them something spiritual, and that, consequently, the number "a hundred and fifty and three," which occurs in the history of the above miracle, has a spiritual signification, which applies not only to the great fishes taken on the occasion, but to those who were signified and represented by the great fishes.

Q. And what do you suppose to be the spiritual import of that number?

A. The number, "a hundred and fifty and three," is composed of three distinct numbers, each of which involves

in it the idea of what is full and complete, for the number "a hundred," when mentioned alone, involves that idea, in like manner the numbers "fifty" and "three," when each of them is mentioned separately. The combination, then, of these three numbers implies what is full and complete in the highest possible degree, and it is accordingly adopted, in the present instance, to denote the full and complete state of the church's increase, whensoever "the net is cast on the right side of the ship;" in other words, whensoever evangelical truth is taught under the influence of heaven-born charity. It is said, on this occasion, that "Simon Peter went up," because by "Peter," as hath been observed in treating of a former miracle, is to be understood the principle of faith in the church, and this principle is always elevated, or goes up, whensoever it submits itself to the dominion of charity. For the same reason, the fishes here spoken of are called "great fishes," because the terms "great" and "greatness," in the Word of God, have always respect to the principle of love and charity, communicated from the Great and Holy God. Unless some internal spiritual meaning, of this description; had been intended to be expressed by the great fishes, here spoken of, also by Simon Peter going up, and likewise by the number a hundred and fifty and three, both the size of the fishes, the ascent of the apostle, and the number, "a hundred and fifty and three," would have been things too trivial to have found a place in the sacred volume of Divine Inspiration, the Word of the most High God.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from the two miracles of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ?

A. From these two miracles I am taught to adore the Mercy and Omnipotence of the Incarnate God, manifested in the accomplishment of the most extraordinary and sublime work ever recorded in the page of any history, human or Divine; I mean the complete victory over death and the powers of darkness announced by the former miracle, and the full and complete union of the

Divine and human natures announced by the latter. In the rising Jesus, I therefore behold, to mine unspeakable consolation, a practical comment on those prophetic words, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction;" (Hosea xiii. 14.) and also on those words of His own, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." (John xi. 25, 26.) In the ascending Jesus also, I read another practical comment on His own words, where he says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father;" (John xvi. 28.) and in another place, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee;" (John xvii. 11.) and again, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." (John xiii. 31, 32.) In the rising and ascending Jesus, therefore, I behold the signing and sealing of the gospel covenant, together with the completion of all the promises of God, because I see death conquered, the powers of darkness subjugated, God made man, and man made God, heaven thus kept continually open in the Divine Humanity of the Glorified Saviour, and all admitted, who are disposed to repent of their sins, and to believe in that manifested God who came to deliver them from the power of sin. Here, therefore, I make the interesting and delightful discovery, that there is but One God in the church, and that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in his Divine Humanity is that God, being Creator from eternity, Redeemer in time, and Regenerator to eternity. Here, therefore, I am admitted by the eye of faith to a participation of the blessed vision seen by the beloved apostle of old, when, as he himself describes it, "He saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden

girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. i. 12—17.) I am resolved, therefore, henceforth to take this God for my God, and thus approach and worship the Invisible Father in the Visible Humanity, which He has been pleased to assume and unite with Himself as the sacred medium, by and through which all His penitent children may have perpetual access unto Him, and He to them. I am resolved, further, to repent me of all my sins, and endeavour to enter into that process of renewed life to which my Saviour invites me both by His precepts and His example. Thus may I encourage the blessed hope, that that Saviour will mercifully accomplish in me, in miniature, the same blessed work which He accomplished when here on earth, in all its magnitude, by first instructing me in the ways of His righteousness, and afterwards conducting me, through His cross and sufferings, to the subjugation of all sin and the powers of darkness, until, finally, He arises also from the dead in me, and is exalted in ascension-glory to the supreme dominion in my love and life, by virtue of which exaltation I shall be enabled to join in the song of the ever-blessed, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;" (Rev. v. 12.) and again, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ [the Divine Humanity], for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." (Rev. xii. 10.) AMEN.

THE SIGNS WHICH FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE.

Q. JESUS CHRIST says to His disciples before His death, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father;" (John xiv. 12.) and again He says, after His resurrection, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) How do you understand these words, and what is the lesson which they inculcate?

A. I understand these words as inculcating on every true believer the absolute necessity of co-operating with Jesus Christ in the great general work of His salvation, which general work includes in it several particular works, called by Jesus Christ "greater works" than what He Himself did, and distinguished by the several striking characters of "casting out devils, speaking with new tongues, taking up serpents, escaping hurt from drinking any deadly thing, and laying hands on the sick, so as to restore them to health."

Q. Do you conceive, then, that man is called to "cast out devils," to "speak with new tongues," to "take up serpents," &c.?

A. Yes ; for Jesus Christ says expressly of every true believer, "The works that I do shall he do also, and that these signs shall follow them that believe."

Q. And in what sense do you conceive those works are to be done by the true believer ?

A. The true believer "casts out devils," when he opposes and subdues evil in himself, for all evils are in close connection with devils ; again, he "speaks with a new tongue," when he acknowledges Christian doctrine, especially the doctrine which teaches that Jesus Christ is God, and that evil ought not to be done, because it is opposed to Him and to His life ; again, he "takes up serpents," when he elevates his sensual principle, by compelling it to regard an eternal end ; again, he "drinks deadly things and they do not hurt him," when he admits false persuasions into his understanding, but doth not suffer them to influence his will and life ; lastly, he "lays hands on the sick and they recover," when he applies the truth, which he believes, to the removal of all his natural infirmities, disorders, and corruptions.

Q. And what do you mean by co-operating with Jesus Christ in these works ?

A. Man co-operates with Jesus Christ, when he believes the words of Jesus Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing ;" (John xv. 5.) and when he nevertheless exerts himself in the discharge of all his duties freely, as if all depended on his own exertions, yet under the acknowledgment that all his power and exertion is from that Great God and Saviour. For the conduct of man in regard to saving works is of a three-fold character, since he may, first, either trust to the Almighty to do every thing for him without doing any thing for himself, or secondly, he may depend upon his own exertions without trusting to the Almighty, or, thirdly, he may combine his own exertions with Divine power, and thus co-operate with that power.

Q. And which of these rules of conduct do you think the safest, and most agreeable to the order of heaven ?

A. I should think the last, because in pursuing the first of those rules, man makes himself a mere machine, and in pursuing the second, he becomes his own god, by resting his salvation on his own powers independent of the power of God, the fatal consequence of which is, that his own activities only tend to separate him more and more from the blessed life of God. Accordingly, Jesus Christ, with a view to secure man against the danger of both these rules of conduct, delivered to mankind this important injunction, "Abide in me, and I in you," (John xv. 4.) by which He meant to teach the necessity of a reciprocal conjunction of Himself with man, and of man with Himself, in the discharge of every duty, before that duty can be of any avail in promoting man's salvation. The law, therefore, of co-operation with Jesus Christ in the performance of religious duties is grounded in the grand design of all true religion, which is to effect man's conjunction with his Maker, since without co-operation it is impossible that such conjunction can ever be accomplished.

Q. Do you conceive, then, that co-operation with Jesus Christ is necessary in discharging the duty of prayer?

A. Yes; I conceive it to be so necessary, that man cannot properly pray without it, since without it, all his prayers are but mere sounds of words, which may more properly be called, saying a prayer, than praying. For all true prayer implies, not only the sound of words, but heavenly affection and heavenly thought, and how can man possess or exercise either heavenly affection or heavenly thought without assistance from above, or from that Divine Being who hath said, "Without me ye can do nothing?" Unless man, therefore, in his prayers looks up to Jesus Christ as the author and giver of heavenly affection and thought, his prayers must of necessity be mere sounds of the voice, and so far from procuring him any blessing, they will but separate him further from its Divine source. Thus it is an eternal law of profitable prayer, that it shall not only be directed to Jesus Christ, but also be acknowledged to be from Him.

Q. And do you conceive that the same co-operation is necessary in keeping the commandments of the decalogue?

A. Yes; for the commandments of the decalogue are laws of spiritual, of civil, and of moral life, being designed of God to effect his conjunction with man, and man's conjunction with Him in the several degrees of man's life, which may be called spiritual, civil, and moral. If man, then, doth not co-operate with Jesus Christ, in keeping these Divine and heavenly laws, he cannot, then, keep them completely, but only in part; for if he doth not co-operate with Jesus Christ in keeping them, he must then keep them—if he keep them at all—from mere worldly and temporal motives, such as the fear of human laws, the loss of reputation, &c.; thus he will keep them as moral and civil laws, but not as spiritual laws, and the terrible consequence will be, that not regarding an eternal end in them—that is to say, not abstaining from evil because it is sin against God, consequently not regarding God and His eternal kingdom—these heaven-born laws will effect no conjunction between God and himself, and no radical purification from his natural evils, as they were designed to do, but will leave him as far from God and His life, and as deeply immersed in sin, as if he never kept them at all. This was the case, we find, with the young man in the gospel, who had thus kept the moral and civil part of the Divine law, but not the spiritual part at the same time, by respecting God in the other parts, of whom, therefore, it is written, that “Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest.” (Mark x. 17—23.) This one thing lacking was co-operation with Jesus Christ in the rejection of evils, and if this one thing be lacking amongst Christians at this day, the necessary consequence must be, that the commandments will be deprived of their purifying and saving efficacy, so that although man, as to the letter of the law, abstains from murder, from adultery, from theft, and from false witness, yet, not abstaining from these evils in the spirit, or because they

are sins against God, he will be a spiritual murderer, adulterer, thief, and false witness.

Q. What, then, do you suppose Jesus Christ means by the greater works which the true believer is to perform?

A. The greatest of all works, and of all miracles, properly considered, is done by the true believer, when he prostrates himself before his Heavenly Father in devout prayer, and keeps the commandments of the decalogue according to the internal spirit both of the Lord's prayer and His precepts, and in co-operation with Him; for in this work both God and man are employed conjointly, since it cannot be effected by either singly. In this work, too, are combined all the miracles which Jesus Christ ever wrought, when understood according to their real, proper, and spiritual meaning; for by this work "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." (Matt. xi. 5.) Thus, by a right use of the Lord's prayer, and a right observance of the Divine precepts of the decalogue, all the infirmities, disorders, defilements, and miseries of man are wrought upon and removed, and since these effects are produced by Jesus Christ in His Glorified Humanity, and by man conjointly, therefore, they are called greater works than those performed by Jesus Christ here on earth before his glorification, and without the co-operation of man. Accordingly, the reason assigned by Jesus Christ for these greater works is expressed in these remarkable words, "Because I go to the Father," which is the same thing as if He had said, "Because my humanity will be made Divine, and I shall thus be enabled to operate on my children with seven-fold energy, whilst they, in their turn, will be enabled to co-operate with Me to seven-fold advantage, by the reception of a seven-fold increase of faith, and love, and joy.

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you learn from the Lord's miracles?

A. I learn, in the first place, that the Blessed Jesus, from His Humanity now made Divine, and by the instrumentality of His Holy Word, is ever willing and purposing to accomplish in the souls of men the same Divine works, or miraculous operations, which He accomplished in their bodies, when here on earth. Thus it is still His Divine will and purpose, by means of His Holy Word, to instruct mankind in the knowledge of the Eternal Truth, which is to deliver them from blindness, by opening their eyes to the blessing of sight. In like manner, it is His will and purpose, by the same means, to render them obedient to the truth, which is to open their ears; also to enable them to profess the truth, which is to unloose their tongues; likewise to dispose them to live according to the truth, which is to make the lame walk; and again, to purify them from their disorderly loves, which is to cure the leper and the sick of the palsy, &c. &c.; lastly, to deliver them from the power of sin, and to restore them to the new life of His most holy love and wisdom, which is to raise them from the dead, and to elevate them in ascension-glory to conjunction of life with Himself. In the second place, I learn what are the works which I myself ought to accomplish, because Jesus Christ hath said of every true believer, "The works that I do shall he do also." (John xiv. 12.) It is therefore my duty, as it is my happiness, to endeavour to cure my natural blindness, my natural deafness, and my natural dumbness, by reading, meditating on, and practising the Word of God. Again, it is my duty, as it is my happiness, to submit all my natural evils, infirmities, and disorders, to the healing virtue of the Eternal Truth, that so the leprosy, palsy, and all other diseases which I have contracted through sin, may be cleansed and cured, and all my faculties both of body and mind restored to their proper health and order. Lastly, it is my duty, as it is my happiness, to die daily unto my natural evils of an inordinate self-love and the love of the world, that so I may be raised up in resurrection and ascension-glory to the pure love of God, and

of my neighbour. In the third place I learn, that to effect these blessed purposes, I must co-operate with Jesus Christ, because this Incarnate God hath said of those who believe, "In my name shall they cast out devils," &c. &c., thus instructing all Christians, that without Him [or His name] they can do nothing, and that, therefore, they ought to look up to Him with humble dependence on His Divine aid, in the performance of every duty, yet, at the same time, to perform it freely as of themselves. Thus, whether they read the Word of God, or are instant with God in prayer, or are employed in worldly callings, or are engaged in combat with their passions and corruptions, or through that combat are elevated to the joy and glory of spiritual victory, they ought in all things to depend on God more than on themselves, yet not so to depend on God as to neglect their own exertions under that dependance. I am resolved, therefore, from henceforth, to take Jesus Christ and His works for my model, and for the model of my own works, and recollecting that I am called to do the same and even greater works, I will so endeavour to imitate His blessed example, that He may again live in me the life which He once lived here below, and that I may live ever in Him, and that thus joining my will with His will, my wisdom with His wisdom, and my operation with His operation, as He is disposed to join His with mine, I may recover gradually from all my natural blindness, deafness, dumbness, lameness, palsy, leprosy, and every other infirmity and uncleanness, until I am restored to that pure and happy state of spiritual health and vigour, in which I shall be enabled to sing the blessed song, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." (Psalm xviii. ver. 2.) AMEN.

THE MIRACLE AT PENTECOST.

Acts ii. 1—36.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared to them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,” &c. &c.

Q. WHAT do you here understand by “the day of Pentecost”?

A. The word “Pentecost” is derived from the Greek word “Pentecoste,” which signifies the fiftieth, because the feast of Pentecost was celebrated the fiftieth day after the sixteenth of Nisan, which was the second day of the feast of the passover. The Hebrews call it “the feast of weeks,” (Exod. xxxiv. 22.) because it was kept seven weeks after the passover. On the sixteenth day of the month Nisan, or March, the wave-offering of the first sheaf was to be made, to implore the Divine blessing on the ensuing harvest, which began about that time, that climate being so much warmer and forwarder than ours; and fifty days being allowed with that for the getting in of all their corn, that is, the remaining fifteen in Nisan (March), and twenty-nine in Ijar or Zif (April), the sixth of Sivan (May) would be the day of Pentecost; when they were to hold the solemn festival of thanksgiving, for their participation of the harvest, together with a grateful commemoration of their being delivered from Egyptian servitude, and enjoying their property by reaping the

fruits of their labours. (Levit. xxiii. 10, 11, &c.) The learned have observed, that the very day of Pentecost was the same day on which God delivered the Law from Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. 11.) as it was that on which the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel was attended with remarkable success.

Q. And what do you understand by their “being all,” on this occasion, “with one accord in one place”?

A. In the original Greek there is no mention here made of “place,” but it is expressed *eis to auto*, which more properly signifies “for this” (purpose), to denote that they were all of one mind to celebrate the solemn feast of Pentecost, which was the object of their assembling.

Q. And what do you conceive to be here meant by the words, “Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting”?

A. According to the literal sense of this miracle, these words are to be understood literally, because they were literally true; but according to the spiritual sense, they are to be understood spiritually, and are to be interpreted in agreement with the general law of interpretation, when applied to signs or symbols from heaven. According, therefore, to this law, by “a sound from heaven,” is to be understood the operation of a principle which affects the will, because “sound” applies itself to the sense of hearing, and hearing is a sense more subject to and connected with the will of man, as the sense of sight is more subject to and connected with the understanding. By “a sound from heaven,” then, on this occasion, was intended to be expressed the operation of the Divine Love which prevails in heaven, and which was designed, according to this symbolical language, to prevail on earth, and therefore it is written, that “it was as a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting,” because by “a rushing mighty wind” was figured the powerful influence by which it was felt and perceived; and by “its filling all the house where they were sitting,” is further denoted its

taking entire possession of the minds of those who were assembled in the house.

Q. But it is written, "There appeared to them cloven tongues like as of a fire, and it sat upon each of them." How do you understand these words?

A. These words again are figurative, and the things which they express, as the cloven tongues and the fire, are representative of spiritual things, agreeably to the mode observable in the Sacred Scriptures throughout, of expressing heavenly principles by natural images. These images were, indeed, presented to the view of the apostles in the manner here described, but, then, it is to be observed that they involved in them spiritual realities, which corresponded with them. Thus, by the image of a tongue was figured its corresponding spiritual reality, which is nothing else but the thought, persuasion, or doctrine, which the tongue is instrumental in uttering; and thus, too, by the image of a fire, was expressed the principle to which fire corresponds, which is nothing else but the principle of love, whether it be good or evil.

Q. Can you mention any passages in the Sacred Scriptures which prove that a tongue and that fire are applied according to the spiritual sense which you here speak of?

A. That the tongue is applied to express spiritual thought, persuasion, or doctrine, is manifest from the following passages:—"Thy tongue frameth deceit;" (Ps. l. 19.) and again, "Their tongue walketh through the earth;" (Ps. lxxiii. 9.) and again, "They have spoken against me with a lying tongue;" (Ps. cix. 2.) not to mention many other passages to the same purport, where it must be evident to every attentive reader, that the tongue is applied to express what the tongue utters, viz., a man's ruling persuasions, or the doctrines which he conceives to be true; for how else can the tongue be said "to frame deceit," to "walk through the earth," and to be a "lying tongue? That fire, too, is applied to express the principle of love, whether it be good or evil, is alike evident from the following passages:—"My heart was hot

within me; while I was musing the fire kindled." (Ps. xxxix. 3.) "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary; they have defiled the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground;" (Ps. lxxiv. 7.) and again, John the Baptist testifies concerning Jesus Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" (Matt. iii. 11.) and again, Jesus Christ Himself says, "I am come to send fire upon earth; and what will I; if it be already kindled?" (Luke xii. 49.) and again, "Every one shall be salted with fire;" (Mark ix. 49.) from all which passages it is most evident that fire is applied in the Sacred Scriptures both in a good and in a bad sense, and that in a good sense it denotes heavenly love, and in a bad sense, infernal love. When, therefore, it is said, as above, that there appeared "cloven tongues like as of fire," by this representation was intended to be figured the doctrine of heavenly truth which was to be taught from that period by the Apostles, together with the warmth of heavenly love from which they would teach. Therefore, the tongues are said to be cloven, because cloven has respect to the twofold love from which they were to teach, viz., love towards God, and neighbourly love; in other words, it has respect to the twofold doctrine which they were to publish to the world, viz., the doctrine of good, and the doctrine of truth, or the doctrine of charity, and the doctrine of faith.

Q. And what do you understand by the concluding words of the verse—"It sat upon each of them?"

A. By "it" is manifestly meant the fire before mentioned, and "sitting" is a term applied to the will, or love, of man, agreeably to what was shown in the explanation of a former miracle; by its sitting, therefore, upon each of them, according to the spiritual idea, is to be understood that the Divine love, represented by the fire, conjoined itself with the love of those who are here signified by "each of them," that is to say, with the teachers of heavenly doctrine in the new church about to be established.

Q. But it follows, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as

the Spirit gave them utterance." What do you conceive to be the import of these words?

A. By the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, is to be understood the Divine operation, or the Divine principle proceeding from the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ, which He calls the "Comforter" and "Spirit of truth," and of which He says, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 13, 14.) The Holy Ghost, therefore, is manifestly the Divine operation of Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ says expressly, "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you;" and in another place, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you;" (John xiv. 18.) and on another occasion it is written, "That Jesus breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" (John xx. 22.) and in another place, "The Holy Ghost was not yet [given] because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 39.) By "being filled," then, "with the Holy Ghost" is to be understood, that they became the subjects of Divine operation in such a sort, that their wills were submitted to the Divine will, their wisdom to the Divine wisdom, and all their intentions, purposes, thoughts, words, and works were thenceforth to be under the guidance and government of Jesus Christ, ruling, directing and blessing them by His own spirit of love and wisdom.

Q. And what do you understand by their "speaking" on this occasion "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance?"

A. According to the letter or literal meaning of these words, by "speaking with other tongues" is to be understood the speaking different languages, or, as some conceive of the miracle, being understood by men of different languages, which amounts to the same thing, and is equally miraculous, since whether we say that the Apostles spake different languages, or (as appears far

more probable) that what they said in their own language was heard by strangers in their language, the miracle is the same, and equally declares the mercy and Omnipotence of a Divine agent; but according to the spiritual meaning of these words, by “speaking with other tongues” is to be understood the teaching of a new doctrine, viz., the doctrine of faith in the Incarnate God, of repentance from sin, and of renovation in the gospel spirit, which doctrine is the distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, and, therefore, is here figured under the symbol of “other tongues.” This new doctrine, or this new tongue, is spoken of in another place, where Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, says to His disciples, “These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.” (Mark xvi. 17.) It is also alluded to in the Word of prophecy, where it is written, “In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan;” (Isaiah xix. 18.) and in another place, “Then will I turn to the people a pure language.” (Zeph. iii. 9.) This, then, is the sign which follows every true believer, viz., that he “speaks with a new tongue;” in other words, that he believes, professes, and practises a new doctrine, by acknowledging the sole and supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, together with the necessity of living according to all His holy precepts, by shunning all evils as sins against Him, and by loving, thinking, and doing whatsoever is good, and wise, and beneficial, because it is from Him, and leads to an eternal conjunction of life and of blessedness with Him. Moreover, the true believer makes the above acknowledgment, and professes to make it, not by any power merely his own, but by a power imparted from above, or from the Divine operation, and, therefore, he speaks with another, or a new, tongue, not in the pride and vanity of his own self-derived intelligence, but in the humility and meekness of entire submission to Divine influence, thus, as the Spirit gives him utterance.

Q. But it is written, that “they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth

this? Others mocked, and said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words, for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing that it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," &c. &c. What instruction do you learn from these words?

A. I learn from these words that there have been, and perhaps always will be, in the world, three different classes of persons, who are differently affected by extraordinary dispensations of the Divine Providence, or by what may be called supernatural events, one class wondering and doubting, another mocking, or deriding, whilst a third, like the apostle Peter in this history, confirms the probability and even certainty of such interpositions by the unerring testimony of the Word of God, which not only bears witness to the credibility of miraculous agency, but also in some instances, as in the present, prepares mankind for the reception of it by the most accurate prediction. I am cautioned, therefore, by the above account, to take heed to myself, how I decide on points of such magnitude and importance, and for this purpose to apply to the oracles of God for the direction of my judgment, that so, in cases of Divine interference and operation, I may neither be found amongst those who doubt, or amongst those who mock, but rather amongst those, who, like Peter on the present occasion, justify the ways of God by a judicious appeal to the sure Word of prophecy.

Q. What, then, do you conceive to be the great end and design of the descent of the Holy Ghost, as announced by the extraordinary symbols above recorded?

A. The miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost was a re-publication of the original record, by which the nature and quality of the life of man, and of his internal connexion with his Maker, was defined, where it is written, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of

life, and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) For by this record it is evident that man was created to be a receiver of life from God, and thus not to possess an inherent life of his own independent of his Creator, but rather to possess a life, which he derived continually by influx from its Divine Source, and for the continuation of which he was every moment indebted to the Divine bounty. This law, then, which asserts man's perpetual dependance on his Maker for every spark of life, [or, rather, of lives] which he enjoys, whether it be the life of love in his will, or the life of wisdom in his understanding, or the life of both in his affections, thoughts, words, works, and delights, was re-published and confirmed by Divine authority, on the occasion of the miracle above recorded. For by the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the memorable day of Pentecost, the communication of life (or lives) from God, which had been closed and obstructed by sin and disorderly love, was intended to be re-opened, so that man might be again restored, not only to the privileges and blessings imparted to him at creation, but also to an increase of those privileges and blessings, in consequence of the redemption wrought by the Great Saviour. For on this occasion, man was to be gifted with new and additional energies, because "the light of the moon was to become as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun was to be seven-fold as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. (Isaiah xxx. 26.) Accordingly, Jesus Christ, the Divine procurer and bestower of those energies, testifies on the occasion, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.) When this Incarnate God, then, had finished the great work of redemption, by the subjugation of the powers of darkness, and the glorification of the Humanity which He had assumed, He now began, from His Divine Omnipotence, to verify His own declaration, by imparting to all believers that more abundant portion of life which He came to com-

municate. Thus the Eternal Father glorified His name a second time, and by the same act provided for the purification, the reformation, and regeneration of His penitent children.

Q. What is it I am to understand by the Eternal Father "glorifying His name," and by glorifying it "a second time"?

A. By the Father's "name" is to be understood, in an eminent sense, the Humanity which He assumed here on earth, and, therefore, Jesus Christ, in speaking of the glorification of His Humanity, addresses Himself to the Father in these words, "Father, glorify Thy name;" (John xii. 28.) and by this name being glorified a "first time" is to be understood that the Humanity was made Divine, by being fully united with the Divinity from whom it came forth; and by its being glorified "a second time," is further to be understood its Divine operation, by virtue of which it was to rule the church here on earth, as it ruled heaven, instructing, purifying, reforming, and regenerating the hearts and lives of all true believers, thus "filling all things," as the apostle expresses it, by becoming the essential life and soul of all that is good and lovely, of all that is wise and intelligent, of all that is holy, pure, and blessed, in the church in general, and in every member of the church in particular. This second glorification of the Humanity of the Blessed Jesus had been before announced by a voice from heaven in those remarkable words, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John xii. 28.) By this second glorification, therefore, of the Great Redeemer is to be understood, not only that His Humanity was made Divine, and thus become the God of heaven and earth, but also that all influx of heavenly life, or, what amounts to the same, of heavenly love, wisdom, and blessedness, was to proceed from that Divine Humanity, and was to be received and acknowledged in the church accordingly. In speaking, therefore, of the descent of the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ says expressly, in agreement with the above idea, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and

shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 14.) Thus the Blessed Jesus cannot be seen in the fulness of His glory until He be seen by the eye of faith, as He was seen of old by the beloved apostle, in the midst of the seven candlesticks; (Rev. i. 12, 13, 20.) in other words, until He be seen in the inmost centre of what the seven candlesticks represent, viz., the seven churches, or the hearts and lives of all true believers, purifying them from sin, and raising them to a blessed conjunction with Himself by renovation and regeneration.

Q. And what am I to understand by what you further said, that by the same act He provided for the purification, the reformation, and regeneration of His penitent children?

A. This follows as a necessary consequence of the glorification above spoken of, for until Jesus Christ be acknowledged in His Divine operation as the only source of all heavenly life, that is to say, of all heavenly love, heavenly wisdom, and heavenly joy in His church, and until man thus makes confession from the heart that his life is not properly his own, but derived perpetually from another, thus that neither good nor evil are properly his own, only so far as he makes them so, by ascribing them to himself, it is impossible that he can either be purified, reformed, or regenerated, since all purification, reformation, and regeneration imply the acknowledgment of Divine agency, and particularly of the operation which Jesus Christ exercises in human minds by His Holy Spirit. But no sooner is this acknowledgment made in the humility and sincerity of a penitent bosom, than all the blessings and graces of purification, of reformation, and of regeneration presently follow, because, then, man begins to acknowledge a Divine power continually present and operative in the centre of his own life, and his religion, in such case, consists in bringing every affection, thought, word, and work into subjection to that power, that so he may be an instrument in its hands of effecting Divine purposes, claiming nothing to himself but a feeling sense of his own infirmities and defilements,

and ascribing the kingdom, the power, and the glory to Him to whom it properly belongs. The great evil, therefore, of all evils to which the human mind is exposed, is the inclination to yield to the delusive suggestion of the tempter of old, "Ye shall be as gods;" (Gen. iii. 5.) in other words, ye shall have an independent life of your own, subject to no control from another, and acknowledging no source but itself. For in whatever mind this suggestion prevails, sin, and death, and misery must inevitably attend it. On the other hand, the good of all goods, or that which conducts to the acquisition and enjoyment of every good, is the inclination to admit and to act upon the sacred and edifying truth contained in those words of the Great Redeemer, "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" (John xv. 5.) by the humble, grateful acknowledgment that the life of man is at all times a derived life, and that thus the connection between him and his Maker is like that which subsists between a tree and its branches; in other words, it is a connection wrought by the perpetual communication of a vital principle, so that as a tree constantly supplies its branches with renewed life and vigour, without which the branches could not subsist, in like manner the Father of Mercies constantly supplies His children with His Vital Spirit, and if His children are deprived of this supply, they then are "cast forth as branches, and withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 6.)

Q. What, then, is the general instruction which you derive from the above miracle?

A. From the remarkable signs and symbols manifested on this occasion, such as "the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and the cloven tongues like as of fire which sat upon each of them," I am instructed in the language of representatives, which is a heavenly language, expressing spiritual realities under the most significant natural images, and inculcating thus the important lesson, that between spiritual things and natural there is an exact agreement established at creation, by virtue of which

agreement the latter are expressive of the former, and are applied accordingly throughout the Sacred Scriptures. I learn, further, from the descent of the Holy Ghost announced by this miracle, to adore with unfeigned thankfulness the mercy and goodness of my Heavenly Father, who, when He had glorified the Humanity which He assumed here upon earth, made that Humanity the medium of communication with His children here below. In that Divine Humanity, therefore, I behold, and rejoice in beholding, the blessed source of all spiritual life, love, holiness, and benediction which God can communicate, and man can receive. I will no longer, therefore, doubt respecting the Divine operation, still less will I be of the number of those who mock on the interesting occasion, but I will rather regard the miraculous descent of the Divine Spirit as the completion of the counsels of the Eternal, the accomplishment of the sure Word of prophecy, and a security to the true believer that he is never for a moment forsaken by his Heavenly Father, but is ever attended by His Divine presence, power, and operation in the inmost centre of his own bosom. Above all, I am resolved to take heed to myself, that this holy guest may be ever pleased with His internal residence in my heart and life, for which blessed purpose I will pray and labour earnestly, through His Divine aid, that all inordinate and defiled love may be ever removed from me, and that in its place may be implanted the pure love of God and of my neighbour. Thus may I humbly hope that the Blessed Jesus will perform in me the same circle of benediction which He performed for His Church when here upon earth; and that, therefore, after instructing, purifying, reforming, and raising me up to Himself, in His resurrection and ascension glory, He may finally descend, and by his Divine operation fill and sanctify all my purposes, affections, thoughts, words, and works, that so I, like the apostles of old, may be filled with the Holy Ghost. AMEN.

PAYER.

O Almighty and Merciful Father, who hast been pleased to manifest Thyself to Thy sinful creatures, as a Man, by assuming a Humanity here below, and afterwards glorifying it, or making it one with Thyself, for the purpose of giving Thy creatures continual access unto Thee, we desire to praise and glorify Thy holy name for this Thy gracious condescension, and most adorable manifestation of Thyself. We implore, at the same time, the aid of Thy Holy Spirit, to open our eyes to a right and edifying view of the wondrous works which Thou was pleased to perform, during Thy sojournings here below, for the benefit and instruction of Thy church. Enable us thus to see that all the miracles wrought by Thee on the bodies of men, for the removal of bodily disease and infirmity, were striking representative figures of the infinitely more important miracles which Thou art ever disposed to work in our souls or spirits. And may this consideration lead us ever to apply to Thee in Thy Glorified Humanity, for Thy Divine and healing virtue, under every pressure of our manifold spiritual infirmities and disorders. Be Thou our restorer from blindness to sight; from our natural deafness to the faculty of hearing; from our natural dumbness to the faculty of speaking; from the leprosy of polluted and perverted affections, to purity and rectitude; from the palsy of obstructed spiritual life, to its free circulation; from the death and grave of our natural evils and errors, to resurrection-life and ascension-glory, through the communication of Thy most adorable love and wisdom! May we thus be taught humbly and gratefully to acknow-

ledge Thee, not only as our best friend, but as our most skilful physician, and not only as the primary cause and source of original life, but as the Divine Repairer of all its breaches, as our Redeemer from sin, and as the Divine Parent of new and heavenly life in us! Enable us thus to see and to perceive, that of Thine infinite love and mercy Thou art ever disposed to perform the same works at this day in every individual mind, which Thou was pleased to perform in Thy church, in the days of Thy Divine ministration here below, by instructing, healing, feeding, strengthening, purifying it, and finally, by raising it from the death of sin to an eternal conjunction with Thee in the love and the life of righteousness. And may this consideration lead us ever to attend to Thy Divine presence and operation, and not only so, but also to co-operate with Thee in all Thy mighty works, from a full conviction that such co-operation can alone qualify us either to discern Thy works, or to be made sensible of the inestimable blessings involved in them. Thus may we humbly hope to become of the happy number of those of whom Thou hast been pleased to declare, "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father:" And thus, too, being successively taught, and led, and healed, and nourished, and raised from the dead by Thy mercy and Omnipotence, we "will give Thee thanks for ever, and will show forth Thy praise from generation to generation." AMEN.

Our Father, who art in heaven, &c.



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